



THE WORLD TEACHER TRUST PUBLICATIONS

E. KRISHNAMACHARYA

This is the seventh volume of the biography of The One who comes down to earth to lay The Law. His presence is felt by those who like Him and those who dislike Him. He is traced and followed by those who seek Him, even after five thousand years. Every time He is expected, His coming is anticipated before His birth. He is the One who comes in many forms. Some of the incidents of one physical incarnation have been traced and engraved in these Seven volumes.

—*Kulapati* E. Krishnamacharya

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Kulapati E. KRISHNAMACHARYA

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VISA KHAPATNAM

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PREFACE

Events exist to the created beings, and never to the creation. They are of two categories—the ordinary and the extraordinary. Events of the daily routine can be called the ordinary. Those that present themselves to change and rearrange the routine can be called the extraordinary. The daily routine of a living being, especially of a human being, includes only an expenditure of the span since there is no contribution in it to the expansion of consciousness. Food, sleep, fear, sex, profession, advantage and disadvantage are all of the divisions of the daily routine. The duration of their occurrence cuts out one's span without contributing to the happiness of oneself or others. The only consequence (not benefit) of these routine incidents comes into existence as the growth of the body with age, the use of the senses and their organs along the patterns of habit and the sparkling of intelligence in a mechanised succession. The wise ones called the aggregate, the habit nature. One learns to seek happiness in the counterparts of the habit nature. Such a learning creeps in imperceptibly and is detected as "death" by the learned. Those, who do not grow aware of this, interpret death in a different way. According to them death is the inevitable disintegration of the physical body. It is evident that this definition is the result of gross illusion. The succession before the physical death is misunderstood as "Life." Such an approach makes them experience death during every moment of their span.

The Wise ones have discovered a path that saves living beings from this continuous death and makes them enjoy span of life. They called this path, the science of spiritualism, the practical experimentation of which is called the Yoga practice. Those who follow the path cross death and are saved to live life. What about the fate of those who do not heed the path? To them their incidents in life shape themselves to divert them from death and to engraft the habit of "The Path." Such incidents are inconvenient to those who live in death and hence they cause sorrow and pain. When a person is discussing Philosophy, relaxed in an arm-chair, if the wife reminds him that it is time to get up, take his bath and eat, it is really inconvenient to him. To a person who is deeply tracked in his routine it is almost death to him if he were asked to vacate the room for a while with all his belongings when it is time to get the room white washed and coloured better. It appears to him that all the work of the day is being disturbed. Such an attitude is real death. Instead, if he understands the advantage of the disturbance enough to make the body co-operate, then he knows that it is not an inconvenience and that it is a change for the better. Such are the changes that occur in the name of the shifts of residence, transfer of countries, change of jobs, loss in business, the inevitability to stop a piece of work, to start something different. In fact the ravages of the age and the stage of life are to be understood in the same way. The purpose served by these incidents cannot be known to those who understand these incidents as inconveniences, difficulties and losses. Not knowing the purpose they drift into the abyss of death by living for the routine. Those who know the purpose can know the immortality of man. Such beings live beyond time.

To those who live in death, their routine forms their habit. To those who live beyond time, the Yogic path



forms their habit. Not caring for the sorrow of the one and the happiness of the other is the third way of living. It is called liberation. To practise this, there is only one way and that is to meditate upon the one existence in all. Practice needs those of all the three parts as something inevitable. One who knows the inevitability can understand the strength and the real significance of habit. Further he knows how to make a better use of habit. At this stage his habit makes the arrangements of his span and brings immortality to him. To bring this subtle concept to life is one of the aspects of this book. To transmit this concept in a shapely manner the author has created the character of "The Angel of Habit" as the servant of "The Lord." It is needless to affirm that the span of Lord Krishna was utilised to exemplify this aspect. The Angel of habit appears directly in the first chapter only. In the following chapters he works as his presence in others according to the awareness of each of them. Hence he is not found directly.

The purpose of the extraordinary incidents in life is to protect the mind away from the environmental tangle. The most impressive of all the extraordinary incidents of life is the dropping of the physical body. It works continuously upon the mind of everyone. Even the laziest mind cannot escape from its impact. The routine minds call it death. They do not see the real death which they experience in their incidents. They notice the physical disintegration as death. To them death is an incident. In fact it is not. People lead life as an anticipation of death through decades and try to adjust their duties by preponing them and making them death conditioned. Those who know the truth can experience the change in their duties as happiness. Those who surpass these two paths know that they are happiness themselves and begin to live as their presence in others in the shape of their good

work. Their birth, nature, ability and strength befit their work. They do not create a nature of their own and do not get entangled in it. Those who have such a birth and such a span are called the incarnations of the Lord. Their birth is anticipated by their predecessors, strong and weak. "May such a one come down to earth and save us", they feel. Then it is time for the Lord to come down in incarnation. The most accomplished of all such incarnations is Lord Krishna. Even the accomplishment is felt by others whereas they themselves have no such feeling. As far as the human knowledge goes such an incarnation is Lord Krishna. (If anyone assures, "I am also one such", we are ready to follow him). This book explains how it is. It makes us understand how even the dropping of the physical sheath of such a one was utilised for the purification and the better of the rest. There are millions of people who believe that the physical dropping is their death. To save such ones you find the clue in this book. It does not mean that this book is so great. It only means that the truth imbibed in this book is second to none.

How the consciousness of the routine man, the scholar, the Yogi and the Seer is being moulded different from one another according to the concept of physical death has been explained in this book. If a person understands the physical droppage as a natural transformation that leads to a better span, aided by nature, how does he experience it? How does a person having mastery over nature utilise this incident better? When he knows that better utility is not for himself or any one individual, what is the manner in which he makes his life better utilised? This book contains the answer.

Sources of information

The statistical data about the birth, physical droppage and the incidents in between have been taken from four scriptures. (1) The Mahabharata (2) The Bhagavata-

purana (3) The Harivamsa (4) The Vishaupurana. They conclude as follows :

(1) Lord Krishna was born in the month of July, 3228 B. C. midnight zero time between the 19th and the 20th.

(2) The droppage of his physical sheath was during the morning hours of 18th Feb., 3102 B. C.

(3) The Mahabharata war was fought in 3139 B. C.

(4) Yudhishtira was made emperor immediately after the war. It was in the 90th year of the Lord. Since then Yudhishtira ruled for 36 years. Yudhishtira's reign ended with the physical passage of the Lord. Hence Lord Krishna was 126 years when he left his physical body.

(5) Lord Krishna lived as the very expression of the Wisdom of the Eternal Law that ruled the world from India. Yudhishtira followed his footsteps as he ruled the holy land. To a great extent Yudhishtira's brother Arjuna also lived up to the ideal. Vedavyasa was a Contemporary of the Lord who could reveal the Lord's plan to the world. Sanaka, Sanandana and Narada among the ageless masters could prepare the ground for the Lord's descent and work. Maitreya, his disciple Maru (Master Morya), another disciple Devapi (Master Kut Humi) and their disciple Jwalakula (Master Djwalkhul) could prepare a new group of world servers to spread the ageless wisdom of the Lord. All of them had the comprehension of the descent of the World Teacher as Lord Krishna. There was also another group of people (the atlantian souls) who tried for power and self-aggrandizement and created groupism and party politics. They created competition, jealousies, enmities. Instinctively they disliked Krishna and were pained to see that Krishna was recognised as the incarnation of the World Teacher. They were Dhritarashtra the blind king, his sons and their followers. There was a struggle between the idea-

logies of the two groups which came down to flesh and blood in the form of the then global war. Yudhishtira and Lord Krishna tried to prevent the war. When war was found inevitable, Yudhishtira felt sorry. His brother Arjuna went into despondency. Lord Krishna took up the inevitability of the situation and utilised the incident of war for a new orientation of the nation. It was not impossible for him to do so because he was the one who could utilise his physical passage for the betterment of the posterity. Installing the grandson of Yudhishtira as his own substitute was one of the miracles the Lord had performed. The course of events has been traced in this book. The author himself does not conclude if the hero of the plot was Lord Krishna or Parikshit. (the grandson of Yudhishtira).

The majority of the characters described belong to the Mahabharata scripture and are historical. The place names like Hastina, Indraprastha (Near Old Delhi) and Dwaraka (a submerged dyke in the seashore of Gujarat) are all historical. Barbarika the international metropolis of the day was historical. It existed on the small delta island in the river Sindhu (in Sind). The city has been described by many foreign travellers in their accounts.

The true name of India has been Bharat through ages. It had been a compact nation that never made intrusions, invasions or conversions in other nations. Against this truth there had been foreigners all through who had been continuously invading, intruding and plundering the land. Essentially the races and nations of the Middle West beyond the waters of the Arabian sea had been war thirsty against Bharat. Many times there were attempts to disfigure the nation and destroy the culture. There were infiltrations into the people and indoctrinations to develop antinational element in the land. Historical incidents have many times proved the

foolishness and the faithlessness of a section of the natives. Kalayavana (The black Yunan), Barbara (a ruler of Barbaria) Alexander, Md. Ghor, Md. Gajani, the Moguls, the English, the Americans and the Russians have not been mythical figures who crossed through the arch of time to capture the holy land. It is also not a myth that a fraction of the sons of India have been helping foreign invaders paving the way into the country. Of late these foreign nations have been understanding the Universal spirit of Indian culture and getting trained to adopt its positive aspects. It all depends upon the stages of the human evolution among those races. There have been many lights across the centuries who paved the way for the transmission of the light of ancient wisdom. Lord Krishna is known as the light of the highest incandescence. Mirroring this light is one of the purposes of the seven volumes of which the present book is the seventh. This book has nothing to do with religion and politics. It is foolish to believe that Krishna was a Hindu, Buddha was a Buddhist and Christ was a Christian.

Many of the historians and archeologists tried to grope in the darkness of antiquity to enforce a date for the Mahabharata war. As far as the statistical data are concerned these research scholars have at best, achieved conclusions that are only opinions based on wishful thinking. Hence the author has taken into account only the text of the Mahabharata scripture. The incidents of Parikshit's reign are taken from the first book of Bhagavatapurana. If anyone remarks that the incidents in this book correspond with those of the present international political situation the answer is that the human nature has been the same through centuries and that the world scriptures reflect the recurring story of human imperfection and perfection. The present author is in no way responsible for the Contemporary Correspondences. That the scriptures of Mahabharata and Bhagavatapurana

include natural solutions to all man-made problems cannot be denied.

Kaliyuga and Kali nature are to be understood differently. The former belongs to the measure of time and the later belongs to the human mind. People with Kali nature (Unprogressive element) exist in all nations, at all times. Horns and tusks grow with the age of a beast. Mustache and barb grow with the age of man. The physical parts of a lady grow with puberty. Each growth has its own age in the span. So also there is an age in individual evolution when he comes into a human body and behaves hastily with his Kali nature. The number of beastly humans increases a little more during the Kali age.

Irrespective of the above fact there is a Kali instinct hidden in every human being. There is another instinct which leads the human being through self-sacrifice and liberation. When followed, it liberates man from the Kali instinct. Great people can impart the progressive instinct to others. Even the Avatars can only impart liberation but they cannot prevent the nature of the Kali age. Lord Krishna had inaugurated his path of liberation when the Kali age made its advent. Since then we have the Kali nature and the instinct of liberation running side by side in our blood. Those who assert the Divine Law can subdue the Kali nature but it exists as a seed awaiting future germination. It exists in the form of one's own opinions about others. In an Ideal spiritualist it never germinates but it awaits as a seed still. It lies concealed as the skeleton while the spiritual practice keeps it buried under flesh and blood living. The flesh and blood contributes to the expression of beauty and smile. It shines forth into the environment as the " Eternal Law. " The skeleton has no such power. Without the skeleton there is no field of action. This paradoxical truth has

been interpreted in the 24th Chapter as the dream of Lord Maitreya. Its seed is sown in the first chapter as the setting Sun that resembled the human skull. The space in the skull works at individual nature that produces the Kali instinct. The space above and beyond the human skull includes space mind that shapes the Divine Law. The picture on the title page is made accordingly.

The characters of Lokayatha, Ganadasa and Prateechi who lived in Siddha Ashram have been well-described in the sixth book named "The Music of the Soul." A mention of these characters is made in the eighth chapter of the present volume. 'Music of the Soul' and 'Man Sacrifice' are the sixth and the seventh volumes of the same work. The whole plan of the Avatar has been amplified in seven volumes.

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Visakhapatnam,
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E. KRISHNAMACHARYA

Chapter 1

Lord Krishna finished his bath, had himself decorated with all the divine ornaments and had his peacock crown on. He was sitting in the lounge upstairs facing the western seashore. Through the window he could see the half-set sun floating on the surface of the waves. It appeared like a skull floating. As he gazed at the scene, thoughts rushed through his mind. He closed his eyes. He saw the same scene in the yonder skies created in his own mind. The half sun globe setting, appeared with its red glow between his eyebrows within. He saw the inside of his skull with his mind's eye and it appeared like the visible half of the sky. The beams of the setting sun grew more and more red until they faded. Also the number of the beams became fewer and fewer. A few lives who live with him in a closer circle, it appeared to him, merged with those beams. Each ray represented one among those lives who had been kindled by himself into the soul light through time.

Suddenly a transparent blue angel made its appearance on the background of His mind's sky. He wore a blue upper garment and stood before Krishna bowing down, folding His hands. His fine transparent upper cloth floated like the waves over the wings of the breeze. All the scenes beyond his body were seen through him—the mountains, the sea and the cities. They were as if seen through a fine sheet of blue glass. The blue angel saluted and said :

“ My Lord, the Lord of the worlds ! You have kindled these lives. They came down to earth and stood as living

beings. Some of them remember their surrender to you. To them you are their life and you are their span. They live in that awareness. Others live with their awareness lost. They live in your light and yet they live to themselves independently. I live among those who remember and it is all by your grace! I waited long to receive orders from My Lord. I find that you are silent through a considerably long spell of time, and I know not why. Is it possible to suppose that I am not recollected? Is it possible for you to forget? Time and again we grow unaware but you have never left me devoid of your awareness."

Krishna smiled in his mind and spoke to the angel: "I well remember the aspects of practice which I gave you as injunctions. It has become your habit to engraft habit-forming nature among those who follow the path of action. Before I propose soul kindling among the new recruits of living beings, you are blessing them with habit-forming nature. The habit nature is taking deeper root in them in the form of their habits and associations. After that my awakening is holding them temporarily. Every time I bestow a new dawn to them, they fall into the habit of losing their light in dusk. Then the habit engulfs them as periodical darkness of the dusk. Thus the wheel rotates."

The angel of habit grew pensive and said: "My Lord! I am your servant taking part in your scheme of creation. How is it that you make me work against you? Can't you find a better lot to me?"

Krishna said: "I don't like to see you go down to the levels of discriminating and differentiating good and bad. The power of my direction keeps you as my co-eternal in the worlds within and without. There is no creation without habit-forming nature. There are no created beings and no plurality of lights without that. Beyond habit, there stands the One Light. It is my habit to bring the many lights forth from the One Light. Those who have neutralised inertia and dynamism into my poise with the help of my awareness, lead their lives on

earth as my own followers. My law expresses itself through them in the form of their lot. They could establish themselves in soul experience for long. Now they think that they are eternal entities. They believe that they go about establishing their own law on earth. This belief is your influence upon them and they know it not. Without this belief they do not work out my law on earth. Thus they come under your influence and await to work with the help of your habit-forming nature. They could see that they come out of the rut of their likes and dislikes and their opinions which they entertained previously. They notice this and it is under your influence that they notice! This they know not. As they notice this transformation, they have their previous associations suspended like the many seeds preserved in the cakes of cow dung. The seeds of their associations cease to germinate. But, the moment they are exposed to the fertile soil of favourable conditions, they begin to germinate once again. As the season comes they attract the required soil, water, air and sunlight. It becomes their habit to germinate into new births with bodies. Then these associations find their full play once again. It is the strength of the habit. What more can I make your lot? You are co-operating with the act of creation and why do you feel that it is against my scheme? You are wielding your influence upon my frame also. It is expressed in terms of my age and the nature of my frame. Look at these Yogis who are enamoured of Yoga practice and its accomplishments. Look at those who live in penance as Rishis, toiling to burn their previous associations to ashes! Look at these Yadu descendants who deceive themselves by understanding their dependency upon me as their sense of security in me! All these beings lived perfect lives with restraint and tolerance for a pretty gap of time. Then they fell into the trap of your habit-forming nature. See, how they behave again! These Yogis begin to fall into classification and assessing levels among themselves. These Rishis find a burning zeal to preach their own law and crystallize as their own doctrines. These Yadus do not understand that their dependency is not their security in me. Gradually they lose faith

in me and begin to try life for themselves. See how they fall into internal hatred and jealousy ! Once again these beings go down along the wheel. This is all the effect of your influence and I blessed you with such a power."

The angel: "I want to know also why you gave me the path of light and the path of darkness."

Krishna: "That which can be seen by the beings is the path of light. That which cannot be seen is the path of darkness. That which can be seen is perceived by the mind and the senses through habit. It acts as an experience of the night and day. It also works as the experience of the landmarks of the various ages and stages of the span. Both these can be known by habit and this is the path of light. However deep one goes through in this path, his associations deceive him as knowledge.

"That which cannot be perceived either through the divisions of time or the divisions of life span is the path of the darkness. It is dreaded as change. Since change is not within his control, one cannot imagine his own changes. The cause of these changes is in the dark. Until one is permitted to know the nature of change, he tries to resist it and he is helpless. It means that he enters death. When one knows the way he learns to make friends with his own changes. Then the change also is understood as habit. At this juncture he knows that the divisions of time and the divisions of his span are all full of changes. The demarcation line between programming and unpredictability is wiped off. To attain this state, one should seek your help. It is to help them that I entrust you with the path of the light and the path of the darkness. I bestowed upon you the path of light as my Soli-lunar consciousness, and the path of darkness as my consciousness of Absorption and Merging. Those who want to live a life of doting in habit live along the path of light. Those who have a mind to practise the surpassing of habit, can see through the path of darkness along the lines of Yoga living. You have to bestow either according to the situation;"

The angel: "You taught me that the limitations of the physical frame are bound to allow life with some imperfections. You also taught me that the limitations of your followers become inevitable, as long as your physical body stands on earth. You said that after kindling your awareness among your followers, they have to still wait to realise your unbound existence, until you propose to remove your physical body. When I learnt these truths through you first I was frightened. In course of time I came to understand the truth of these truths. I too have a glamour for your physical frame. I am not ashamed of it, since it is a part of your play. One doubt still lingers in me. After a long time when beings live pure lives beyond the conditioning of inertia and dynamism, they once again fall into a life of limitation. Then what is their culmination? Is there any scope for their final liberation? Another doubt: After a long span of penance and incandescence of power if the mind of a Rishi goes down again into thoughts of likes and dislikes, is it not disastrous to creation?"

Krishna: "You speak of final liberation! Nothing is final. Liberation is a concept limited to one's own comprehension in terms of his present state. It is only a concept of the individual about the Unlimited. One sees Eternity through the aperture of his own concept, like the one who sees the sky through a window. One's own craving for what he sees beyond is named Liberation. Its satiation is also in no way different from the satisfaction of a child who holds the image of the moon in a mirror. It is also part of my play. Since liberation also is a concept, it is the truth which one has to know, and not the Truth which is Myself!

"Your next doubt is that, the likes and dislikes of a penance illumined mind are disastrous to creation. Yes, They are disastrous to the creation of the physical entities. You see such disasters in punishment, murder, war or a curse. Disasters exist to the physical creation of the five elements and the mind that clings to them. On the higher planes likes and dislikes in the minds of penance-scored Rishis incubate

as spores of sparks. For aeons of time they battle in a unit space. Then they flame out as sparks. Each spark serves as a seed creation and begins to sprout. Myriads of such seeds exist as groups in space and continuously unfold as the ever blossoming petals of endless lotuses. Each lotus finds its origin in Me as its centre. A part of Myself is uttered from it as One Creator. Then time begins to move in it. These impulses of inertia and dynamism are hatched as the many galaxies. They twinkle as stars in darkness and fill the unit space of the hollow of my skull."

The angel suddenly disappeared into the darkness of his mind's sky. Krishna found many groups of stars expanding into universes around him. Each group has an upper hemisphere of sky inverted over them like a skull. Five such skulls slowly advanced to him and settled around Him. As Krishna opened his eyes, he found Gada, Samba, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Saarana. The five fellows sat around him in the room and meditated with closed eyes. The ideas in their minds twinkled in the mind of Krishna as stars. As he looked through the window, he saw the western sky after sunset, all filled with stars twinkling. They were reflected in the western sea along with the background darkness,

Chapter 2

“‘We are ahead of the Kali age. Law is honoured only to a one-fourth. The rest of the three-fourths will be lawlessness.’ Thus spake Parasara, my Guru, repeatedly. It was not enough. He had professedly written in his scripture, the *Vishnupurana*. He was familiar with the nature of the past and the future, the nature of Time. According to his writ, we now find the landmarks of Kali through degrees. We have not yet entered Kali. We still live towards the fish-tail of Dwapara Yuga. Even now we find many untoward things, before the advent of Kali. Many horrible things take place before our eyes. People began to worship a human head as God and they made a cult of it. Some great souls even drifted into the tide and contributed to the destruction of mankind. See the case of my classmate, the son of Parasara. He is well-versed in the Vedas and their expositions, the Vedangas. Even such a one believed a human being of the clan of Yadus as the very incarnation of the Lord. Even my Guru fell into that spell in his last days. In spite of my many warnings, he heeded me not. He had incorporated the life incidents of Krishna in his scripture *Vishnupurana*, and made him the hero of the scriptures. Do you know the consequence? Krishna became the God of our age and sat tight.”

Akrura muttered to his disciples as he was engaged in painting the sacred footprints of the Lord beautifully on his face, shoulders, chest and belly, the twelve ordained places of his body. As he washed the silver marking-rod of the sacred prints to replace it in the box, he saw the

prints of the conch and the wheel on its either side. He smiled and continued, " This conch and this wheel are sacred symbols. They are the emblems of the divine weapons of Lord Vishnu. Vishnu is described as the Narayana of the Vedas and he is no other than the Absolute Parabrahman. He is the Lord Omnipresent. Krishna seems to have believed that he himself was the Lord Omnipresent. He carried these two weapons to prove the fact and filled the eyes of his followers with glamour and awe ! Yes, the innocent public is always vulnerable to the glamour of such a type. Poor public, it cannot understand the path of Lord Narayana, who establishes the law and shows the way to the Ultimate Truth. No one can understand this, since the Kali is fast approaching. "

Saying so, Akrura came out and got himself seated on the small platform constructed around a small peepal tree in the foreground of his compound. On the ground before his feet, Akrura's many disciples sat upon small mats made of sacred grass. All faces have the vertical brow marks neatly painted. All were clad in sacred silk lower garments, with yellow folds of golden glitter. All had knotted tufts of hair at the back of their clean shaven heads. They wore upper garments, pure in milk white folds. They raised their sonorous voices along with that of Akrura, who began chanting the Vedic hymn addressed to Lord Vishnu. The little parrots on the peepal bough over his head went into ecstasies and uttered, " Narayana, Narayana. "

Akrura explained : " This Mantra from the Rigveda exclaims that the body of Narayana is beyond all measures. It is beyond thought and comprehension. The Vedas are definite about it. Still our Krishna lives under the self-delusion that he is the incarnation of Narayana. This is one of the features of the Kali age. It is a wonder to see how the great scholars and the great seers are also deluded in the same way ! Parasara, my Guru, is the one who knew the scriptures and the trends of the various ages. He gave enlightenment to many thousands of disciples

through his initiation. That Krishna could delude such a one means that he is not an ordinary intellect. By birth he has some powers and no one can deny it. Even then he cannot be called the Lord Himself! It is proper to accept that he is a unique soul. Vidura believed Krishna and fell into delusion. The result is that he lost his services in the court of Dhritarashtra. Then he had to make an ingress into the forests in the name of pilgrimage. No one knows where Vidura is now. No one knows if he is alive at all! Kunti believed Krishna to be a God and entrusted her children to his care. The result is that they had to face many difficulties from childhood. By the grace of this God, they had the experience of poison, fire, water, cobras, etc. Then they had the experience of the palace of illusions created by Maya. Consequently, they were defeated at the dice, and had to make the forest their abode. When their queen was being disgraced, the Pandavas did not heed, since they were under the spell of their God. The whole game ended in the sweeping destruction of eighteen squadrons through a period of eighteen days, in war. It brought about the devastation of the heroes of the Kuru clan. New water of the season drives out the water residue of the river. This Mahabharata war swept off ten thousand heroes from the Yadu clan along with others. The Lord gave out his sermon in the battlefield and it is like the song of cremation."

One of the disciples stood up and said: "The sermon is composed in the form of a *song* by the son of your Guru, Vedavyasa. He incorporated it in his *Mahabharata* scripture and called it "Bhagavadgita."

Akrura: "We have no objection if it is called 'Krishna-Gita.' Is it not too much for him to call it Bhagavadgita? Is there anything new in its import? Krishna simply repeated a few of the postulates which were already established by the ancient Rishis. He repeated them parrot-like! Vyasa could gauge the influence of Krishna countrywide. For the vanity of being called Vedavyasa he had incorporated the poem in

his book. Those who are worldly-wise manouvre the *possessions* in Kali age. He allowed his beard and mustache grow and established a hermitage in the mystic island Krishnadweepa. There he could attract the vigorous youth of the country as his disciples. No sooner than my Guru left his physical sheath, this Vedavyasa had the guts to change the Vedic tradition and re-edit the texts. He divided the scripture into four Vedas in his own way and entrusted each to one group of his disciples. No one among them is capable of reproducing the whole text of the scripture. Weak memory is one among the many features of Kali age. As soon as Yudhishtira came to power as the emperor, then Vyasa composed the contemporary history in the name of Jaya. He thereby got himself attached to the emperor. He filled the book with the stories of the present rulers and their dynasties. As he could gather and compile the contemporary incidents of the land, he is favoured by them all. In this way he became prominent and got himself established. More than half of the book is aimed at proving Krishna to be the incarnation of the Lord. Those who know how to approach, become prominent. Some time ago our Pundarika made a study of Vyasa's *Bharata*. Do you know, Pundarika, if it contains atonements and appeasements which are of any help to us at the present juncture? Since three years we have no rains in this part of Yadava territory. People are leaving our area to go and settle in different directions. Some of the scholars are leaving their villages for good. We find them trying to settle in Dwaraka and Hastina. My father, Swaphalgu, was blessed by the gods and favoured. Wherever he was there were timely rains in that area. I too inherited the favour of the gods and all these days it was customary that timely rains served the area wherever I lived. I once left the Yadu territory and settled somewhere else for some time. Then the Yadavas had no rains. Now, after such a long time, it is a wonder that the area of my presence has no rains continuously. Thus the law will be disturbed in the Kali age and it is

proved here. We shall find out if there is a procedure in the *Mahabharata* to appease the gods for better rains. We will follow the procedure and find out the ability of this Vedavyasa !

Pundarika : "Master ! It is said that there will be rains when the Virataparva of Vyasa's scripture is recited in a ritualistic way."

Akrura : "So says Krishna, is it? Better we do like this. We will go to Dwaraka and invite Krishna to come and perform rituals and see if it rains. We will invite him with all the honours due to him. We will see if Krishna worships the Vedic gods like Indra and Varuna in the ritual. Who knows if he refuses to worship them in the pride? Let us also test him if he cares to wear the vertical brow mark during the time of austerity. Till now Krishna uses his musk brow mark, preferably to keep the people enchanted under his spell."

Pundarika : "Master! We have seen some of the disciples of Vidura in Hastina, who worship the images of Krishna on their altars. There we find the vertical brow mark on the face of those images."

Akrura : "It is all done by the disciples in their foolish veneration. According to my Guru Parasara, the vertical brow mark is the symbol of the footprints of Lord Vishnu. Krishna believes himself to be the Lord Vishnu in His incarnation. Then how does he prefer to wear his own footprints on his face? The disciples of Parasara hold the vertical brow marks, the wheel and the conch as the pious insignia of the path. During the ensuing rituals also, we don't prefer to eat with those who do not wear these marks."

Pundarika : "Master ! Vyasa has grown old by now. I came to hear that he left the mystic island and made Badarikashram his abode where he might spend time with his disciples. So says Chataka."

Chataka : "And something more. One day Vyasa grew despondent as to what to do for the posterity. Then Narada

came and initiated him into the secrets of *Bhagavata*. Now Vyasa is composing an exposition of *Bhagavata* into an elaborate scripture poem according to the injunction of Narada. During the previous night Vyasa could receive some poems in his dream. He began his opening chapters of the scripture with them. He is dictating the book to his disciples."

Akrura : "I believe that he might have found place for Krishna's biography in this book also!"

Chataka : "The main content of the book is Krishna's story itself. Some of the celibate disciples of Suta recited verses from it. The verses are the passages from the description of Krishna. The central theme is Krishna's story, around which Vyasa has composed the biographies of the many devotees through time."

Akrura : "First, I will start tomorrow for Badarikashram. I will invite Vyasa to our place along with his own disciples. Then I will go to Dwaraka and invite Krishna with all humility and goodness. Then we can test if these two people can make it rain."

Saying so he took out his snuff box. He opened it, took out a pinch of snuff prepared from perfumed herbs and inhaled.

Chapter 3

It is two days since a devotee sat in deep meditation on the top of a mountain. Clouds passed above his head and strong winds whistled about him in various directions. There is a thick bamboo forest nearby. Winds entered the worm-holes of the age old bamboos as they blew and produced many thousands of whistles. Yet they seem not to enter the ears of the devotee. It seems that he is in Samadhi, the state of absorption. Suddenly clouds gathered and began to dart down slanting showers which soon grew into a torrential downpour. The rain combed down his fluttering locks of hair. Rain drenched his matted hair, and emerged in a squeezing gush. The flow of rain slid down his head over his face along his nose. From there it fell upon his breast in many small streams. Still he sat undisturbed. No one can imagine if his body is still linked with his senses.

Suddenly a young hermitess of eighteen trecked out through the curved mountain path. She has her upper garment made of tiger skin and her lower garment made of deer skin, wrapped above her knees. She has a Kamandalu and a wreath of beads in her right hand. The left hand holds a trident. She came straight and stood before him gazing upon his brow centre for a few minutes. Then she touched his brow centre with her index finger. He opened his eyes. Then she said: "Go to the cliff of that mountain yonder. You will find no rain on it, since it is above the cloud-zone. Henceforth you can conduct your search." Saying so, she turned back and walked briskly and disappeared into the curved mountain path.

Vidura stood up and followed the guidance. Who is this girl? It must be a Siddha Yogini. Many a walking light of this type moves about the Himalayan tracks. While the human races around the globe come up and go down the spokes of the rolling wheel of civilisation, such Yogis stand unchanged and walk about the retreats of the Himalayan cliffs, north pole and Meru, as they did in the days of old. With such thoughts of surprise, Vidura began to follow the climbing path. He still felt the touch on his brow centre. It walked with him. Clouds cleared and there was bright light. The many cedars along the valley nodded their heads to the mountain breeze and sprinkled showers of mild perfume. Tall aromatic trees stood up in the valley with their heads grown into the very bowels of the yonder skies, their heads dancing in the gushes of mountain winds. They fluttered as many green banners. Many an ant-hill gurgled rain water when it began to rain. The cobras that were obliged to leave their holes stood coiled around the tender branches of the bushes. Now that the rain is over, the cobras are slowly sliding down the trees or crossing the footpath here and there. Peacocks stood in groups amidst the foliage of big trees. They slowly fluttered their wings and tails as they glided on to the ground in a slanting fashion. Herds of deer came out of the shades into the warm sunshine. As they grazed in the meadow, they looked at each other in questioning silence about the passing presence of Vidura. In deep appreciation, Vidura walked, talking to his own silence and witnessing scene after scene in the mountainous paths. His eyes wandered towards the valley on his left. The depth and vastness of it struck him. It is of unimaginable size and depth. His eyes could not trace where the heaven and the earth met. As above so below! He saw as much sky below him as above his head. It reminded him of the Omnipresent One who exists within the egg of space between heaven and earth. He slowly climbed up the footpath which had a thick layer or glassy ice on either side. Sun's rays reflected and reached his eyes like many silver needles and pins of gold. The sun ascended

mid heaven, when Vidura entered a spacious jungle of big badari trees. He was delighted to know that he entered the outskirts of Badarikashram. He walked the vast sweeps of covered shades and at last reached a vast lawn. It all glittered in emerald green, and he felt refreshed. A big tiger stood there and its eyes glittered in sunshine. The tiger licked his whiskers and turned his head back with a majestic air. Little deer were playing in sunshine, licking the legs of the tiger. "It must be Badarikashram", Vidura said to himself. His heart danced with delight and he proceeded through the thickset gardens of tulasi, planted in rows. Vidura disappeared amidst the tall rows of tulasi.

Notes of Vina are heard from a distance. A hermitage caught his eye. Some sages who gathered there were playing on Vina, as they chanted the songs of Vishnu. Some of them played on the flute and some were dancing in ecstasy. The smile on their lips knew no fatigue. Their tender faces were filled with little beads of sweat that soon disappeared in the mountain breeze. Vidura approached them, prostrated from a distance and stood up. They continued to sing and dance, though they noticed the arrival of Vidura. They gathered round Vidura and offered their guest a song :

"It is the Lord who approaches us in all shapes.
When He is pleased, He visits in one shape or other.
When there is love in us He comes as our Light."

They danced around Vidura as they sang. At the end of the song, Vidura bowed down to them with utmost humility and said : "O Ye great ones! You all belong to the lot, who glorify the Lord as the Song of Life. I am a Sudra by birth. My name is Vidura. I am not able to endure the idea of all of you glorifying me as the form of the Lord."

One of the sages said : "We are disciples of the great sage Suta, who is a disciple of Vedavyasa. Vedavyasa is the disciple of Parasara. I am Saunaka. This is Bhargava. That is Bharadwaja, the son of Drona, Aswatthama by name. All

the living beings on this earth are known to us as friends by the grace of our Guru. We know that you are Vidura, the noble one. Sudras are sacred to us, as they are born of the feet of Lord Vishnu whence the sacred Ganga is born. The land of the Himalayas is the birthplace of Ganga. Anyone who glorifies the Vedic path by following it is worthy of our worship. Recently Lord Sanatkumara graced us with his presence along with Vedavyasa. It happened near the hermitage of Sage Suta. Lord Maitreya also came from the caves of Sravasti by the same time. It is for the first time we saw Maitreya after Parasara left his recent physical sheath. Maru and Devapi also arrived by the same morning, while Djwhal Khul arrived by noon. He came from the hermitage of Agastya by space travel."

Vidura : "The very mention of these holy ones at a time is enough to make my heart feel the awakening of Lord Narayana. Could you favour me by repeating some of the injunctions of Lord Sanatkumara?"

Saunaka : "First he examined my edited collection of the Vedic hymns which I worked out according to the scheme of Vedavyasa. He approved of it and named it "Saunaka Samhita." Then there was a discussion about the issue of Sudras chanting the Vedas. It appears that some scholars started the issue under the influence of the Kali age. Do you remember, Vidura, the days when you were in the service of the blind king Dhritarashtra? One day the blind king wanted to hear the scripture. Then you hesitated to recite the passages, since you are a Sudra. You had invited Lord Sanatsujata and made him recite. Sanatkumara narrated the incident to us and said: "This poor Vidura is wise in the realisation of Brahman. He is a child of innocence, though he is replete with the light of Brahman. He is going to visit Badarikashram shortly. Thereafter he will proceed to the presence of Lord Krishna. Still there are some points of doubt and hesitation left in his mind. His lot will be the time-lagged search for Lord Krishna." Saying so, the Lord Sanatkumara heaved a deep sigh and kept cryptic silence.

Vidura : " After covering many a pilgrimage, and after purifying my head with the sacred dust of the feet of the many accomplished ones, my past associations still cling to me. Still I feel the pinch of anger whenever the name of the blind king reaches my ears. "

Saunaka : " But our Lord Sanatsujata did not feel ashamed to go to the house of the same blind king. He had no reservations in giving his presence to the blind king. How many births are required for the human souls to reach the level of our Lord. This land of Brahma has been purified, having been bathed in the enchanting music of our Lord Sri Krishna's flute. Krishna poured himself out as the all-soul through the sound of his flute-music and there is no atom in the land of Brahma that is not sanctified. It is a pity that the past associations of the many beings still sprout again and again. The rising sun chases the shadows of the beings under their feet, as he ascends to the mid heaven. When the same sun begins to descend westward, these shadows of the beings escape out in the other direction and grow in size. Still the Lord of Light is not fatigued to make his appearance again in the east. This little story of hide and seek is re-narrated and being sung in thousands of meters by the many thousands of Vedic seers from times immemorial. These hymns of wisdom collected through aeons have been gathered by Lord Vedavyasa and are handed down to us. We are trying to classify and compile them. It is our good fortune that our days and nights are occupied with the work. Since our hearts are filled and our lives are fulfilled, we do not find time to fall into the mine of our past associations. But for this, we would have been in the same plight as the others. It is a wonder that the various beings living in the cosmic presence of Krishna still have their likes and dislikes repeatedly sprouting. When even Akrura, the direct disciple of Parasara, has deviated from the path, who else can cross the influence of past associations ? This morning Akrura came to see Vedavyasa. We had a talk with him. We find a queer logic in his

talks. He asked us, 'Where is your Guru, Suta.' We said that he was in the presence of Vedavyasa, taking down the great scripture, *Mahabhagavata*. Then Akrura said, 'I learn that they are depicting the life of Krishna in their scripture. Why don't they include my life incidents also?' I informed him that the book contains Akrura's life incidents also. He felt curious and proceeded to meet Vyasa. By this time they might have reached the hermitage of Suta. He follows Suta and, in all probability, Akrura can manage to have the presence of Vedavyasa. We will be happy if you stay with us this night. Tomorrow morning all of us can visit Vyasa. Now it is near sunset. We will finish our Vedic chant for the evening. Then we can sing the glory of Vishnu and spend this night in hearty talk."

Chapter 4

White as the increasing moon of Sarat a conch is held in the left hand and is blown ferociously. The face smiles in anger and the eyes grow red. It is the face of Lord Krishna in the battlefield, inaugurating the game. This is the picture painted in many colours. A prince stood before the picture, absorbed in deep meditation. It is the morning of his thirty-fifth birthday. After an auspicious head bath, the dry locks of hair are floating and fluttering in the morning breeze. The little musk brow mark added to the delicate graceful features of the face. His eyes present the glitter of the morning sunbeams reflecting on the gentle waves of Yamuna. He cast his looks upon the face in the picture in great rapture. Then he smiled. Every morning and evening, it is usual with him that he sits with the picture, carrying conversations. He goes on talking about many subjects and questions about many problems. Since his very childhood, he is a devotee of Lord Krishna. The Lord saved him from death, when he was in his mother's womb and the very foetus received the imprint of the Lord in its bosom. Since he was born and brought up, he received initiations of Bhaktiyoga through his grandfather Yudhishtira. The practice of offering himself to the Lord reached perfection. During the last ten months, his meditation took a new turn and gave a new experience. He found himself absent and the Lord being present in his place during the hours of meditation and absorption. He could notice it clearly. This morning he saw in his meditation, Lord Krishna as he had assumed the role of Arjuna's charioteer. In the left hand he held the conch

blowing. In the right hand he held a whip and stood before the prince smiling gracefully. After a while the prince opened his eyes and came to his senses. He saw his grandfather Yudhishtira standing. The emperor who has seen a century, stood firm and gay before him. He wore his royal crown with many a gem glittering like the galaxies of the distant skies. He smiled through his profuse milk-white beard and moustache and appeared like the full moon before the dawn.

"Do you follow the answers transmitted by the Lord through this picture?" asked Yudhishtira and said, "I feel that our clan is purified by the perfection you reached in the practice of your absorption through meditation. May you rule the land of Brahma in due and ancient form. Protect the law and keep up the tradition. In our generation, we witnessed nothing but destruction and devastation in the name of law. May your generation establish the law in peace. I bless you so on this occasion of your birthday. Many of the nobles and the elite among the four classes of the citizens of Hastina at the royal gate await to greet you and offer their blessings. Come with me, they are all eager to see you. You follow me to the ground floor, I will present you to all."

Parikshit, the prince, touched the feet of Yudhishtira and stood before the mirror. He set his upper garment right and had his crown of many jewels on. He said, "Grandfather! Today I have the desire to go to Dwaraka and have the presence of Lord Krishna after receiving the blessings of all our elders. If you permit me to do so, I will proceed."

Yudhishtira "Sure, my accomplished one! Today you are going to have the Darsan of our Lord most assuredly."

Saying so, Yudhishtira led the prince by hand downstairs. There at the gate they saw the smiling face of Lord Krishna proceeding towards them greeting. Parikshit jumped with joy and said, "The words of my grandfather never go in vain!" Then he fell prostrate upon the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, and stood up before him.

Krishna : "Today I came to bless our little, humble, discrete prince with a new present. Hundred milk white horses from Paraseeka have been brought to you as my gift. There they stand trotting in graceful dance like the many waves of the milky ocean. These Paraseeka steeds are being fed daily with rice and milk. May the steeds shower glances from the Goddesses of Wealth and Splendour. May you not use them for any battle. May you find them witness your peaceful ways to lay the law on earth."

Firm and humble, the prince stood before the Lord and said : "My Lord, the Most High ! I perceive your light in all directions, laying the law. I understand that the land of Brahma as a whole is replete with your presence. By virtue of your grace, it is not difficult for me to lay the law in this land, as it was done by my predecessors. May your smiling face be with me at all times. May this frame of mine be an offering in the ritual of my royal duties. I do not see anything more than this."

Bhima came forth and blessed : "Your aspirations are quite in tune with the fame of our clan. May you stand as our lamp-post."

Arjuna came forth and blessed : "May the archery you inherited from me be used to establish peace. Punish the wicked, protect the pious and be known through your fame."

Nakula came forth and blessed : "My boy ! Grow able. Be pious. Dispelling the evil of the Kali age, will be your lot. The Kali age begins this year. Its features are already being felt. The soul music of our Lord Sri Krishna has defeated our enemies three years ago. There they wait to establish once again in North Western frontiers. The Sakas, Yavanas and the Barbaras of the North-West ghats are trying to alert themselves. Many are their plots and intrigues to introduce their culture and their customs of beef-eating, alcoholism and sexualisation of culture."

Parikshit : "Your blessings keep me alert and make me surmount the many obstacles."

Turning to Krishna, the prince continued : " My Lord, today you have honoured me with this gift of the hundred milk white steeds from Paraseeka. I value your grace more than all. It is the one which I expect from you at all times, in all directions. Your grace visited me long before I could expect it. When I was in my mother's womb, you saved me from pain and death. There is something behind the story of my birth more than what is understood. Unless you intend some fulfilment through my life, there was no need for you to take such a particular care. "

Krishna : " You are meditating my presence every morning. Can you give out your experience during your meditation ? "

Parikshit : " Words are not enough to explain my meditation of your lotus feet. Still I try to give out what I see. Since three days I see something new. It is a lady of about eighteen years and she appears in the attire of a Yogini. Clusters of divine light illumine the space around her. In one hand she has a Kamandalu and a Rosary of beads. In the other hand she holds a trident. The locks of her hair are tied above her head and the face radiates peace. "

Krishna : " She has a graceful third eye between her brows. Her abode is in the Himalayas and she is known by her devotees as the Daughter of The Mountain. She is the consort of Lord Siva. "

Parikshit : " Why is it that she appears when I meditate your presence ? "

Krishna : " We are one. The shape of Lord Siva is pure light beyond any shape. He is the object of my meditation. I allure the beings with my shape. My shape is all-alluring. There was a time when I conducted deep penance on the cliff of Mount Kailas to meet Lord Siva. Siva did not appear before my eyes during those twelve years. I then assumed the form of his youthful wife, the Daughter of The Mountain. Then Lord Siva was caught allured and began

to chase me. The Daughter of The Mountain patted him from the back and sprinkled her graceful smile. It was a sight which was never before. All the sages and the divine scribes waited through vast sweeps of time to witness the scene. Then they could understand that the Lord Siva was my light and myself, his graceful form. This is the merry child-play of the Light and the Form. The occasion had sown the seed to clear off the chaff of the earth and lay the law once again. The seed sprouted into a tender creeper of time with an array of incidents dreadful and beautiful. The result is the Royal Sacrifice of Yuddishthira for sojournity; the play of the dice, the exile and sojourn incognito of your grandfathers. Finally incidents entered rushing into the whirlpool of the war of the wars. Since the day of our play, this lady, the Daughter of The Mountain, lived in me as my sister and peeped through my smile when needed. My smile kindled devotion to some, illusion to others, malice and hatred to some others and wrath still in some others. The result is that Jarasandha chased me, Sisupala hated me, the sons of the blind king tried to covet power and your grandfathers made a surrender to me. Many types of mental activity have been kindled in many minds and took the course of many incidents. Henceforth the Daughter of The Mountain will be with you in meditation. Whenever you think of me, others see my features in your face. This is the one boon I bless you with on this occasion of your thirty-fifth birthday."

Parikshit: "I know not the purpose, the end and the consequence of this valuable boon of yours. Still I offer myself to the unknown purpose."

Krishna: "My alluring light is not necessarily sweet at all times. I myself do not know how my own ways work out. My procedure to establish the law stands on one side in the land of Brahma while the destructive features of Kali stand on the other side. They are always in struggle with each other. When I offered myself in the form of my flute-music three years ago, it stood as the protective background of all the living being. At the same time Kali stands stimulating the previous associations

of all these self same beings. Slogans of cow slaughter and beef-eating are being floated as the stimulations of Kali. My path is to use the cow for the milk and the bull to till the land. Cattle-tending has therefore become the main feature of my path. The path establishes wealth amidst people. The children of Kali believe more in power than in wealth. They are being attracted by power goddess in the name of money. The same goddess, the Daughter of The Mountain makes her presence felt in the form of money and she thereby makes them grow inhuman with power. She creates confusion in their minds. The villagers who believe in wealth and not in money are unaffected by the tendencies of Kali. They stand as Karma-yogis and the children of God. Those who come to power try to squeeze the children of God. The children of power use the power of money to destroy the agriculturists. They offer loans to them and make them run into debts. It is all to disturb the men of agriculture and cattle from their professions. It is to keep them under their boots. Further they plan to make them helpless by opening slaughter-houses of the cow and the bull. It is all to destroy the wealth of the cattle. To this end they float these slogans of cow slaughter.

“The next step is they teach the agriculturist and cattle tenders to sell away their wealth for money. There will be decay of wealth and the increase of money. People will be stricken by fear of poverty and they lose all tendency to charity. One of the main aims of Kali is to make people fear that livelihood is not possible by land or by cattle. The yield becomes less and less when dependency leads to a spirit of servitude. Again Kali induces his children to convert the many agricultural fields into fabulous cities. There will be famine everywhere. The children of Kali teach begging food from other countries. Some of them induce people to invite foreigners to rule the land. It is for this occasion that the Sakas, Yavanas and the Barbaras wait at the gates of the North-Western frontiers. All this becomes inevitable due to the instigation of Kali. Your lot is to control the

situation and rule the empire once again for some time according to the traditions of the classes and the ages. All this stands on your shoulders."

Parikshit: "Why should I fear anything when you are here?"

Krishna: "You will be made emperor this year itself. As a rule, law follows the ruler. Hence all this is to be worked out through you only."

Chapter 5

Five thousand people can sit in comfort and have respite under the shade of this banyan tree. It is located on the cliff of the mountain Gandhamadana. The branches of the tree spread sidewise in all directions. Hundreds of prop-roots descend and establish themselves in the rocky soil to form as many trunks. Celibate pupils are moving busily hither and thither. Some of them are spreading small square mats of holy grass in the shade of the tree. The sunrays that escaped through the mosaic of foliage glittered upon the tiger skin garments of the celibates. Also the celibates placed palm leaf manuscript volumes on each of the mats. Then they stood up with expectant looks. Some of them had vertical brow marks on their faces and some of them wore the horizontal brow marks of the sacred ash. The vertical brow mark denotes the devotees of Vishnu, while the horizontal brow mark, those of Siva. All of them had pearl ear-rings. Some of them shine in golden yellow, while others are of a darker complexion. Everyone is strong and sturdy and everyone is a stalwart. As they stood gazing towards the entrance gate of the cottage, within a few minutes, they had the presence of a great sage with a divine aura around him. He had the sacred thread and the tuft of hair characteristic of a Brahmin spiritualist. The face was half revealed above the thickset beard and moustache of pepper salt colour. The features carried a glow of natural beauty, that radiated through his smile. He came out of the entrance gate and stood under the banyan tree. There was a small wooden dais at the centre of the gathering. He stood at the dais

and carried a palm leaf manuscript in his hands in a spirit of veneration. In his thundering voice, he began chanting Purushasukta in three tones according to the musical tradition of the Samaveda. The other voices joined him and the song of a thousand voices travelled down the cliff windward in many directions. The mountain winds carried the music far and wide on their wings. It was sage Saunaka who was leading the singing. It ended in an invocation of peace and they all stood again awaiting someone. Another sage came out of the hermitage and his complexion radiated the glow of orange red. He smiled as he came out with all his broad features, wide eyebrows, and round eyeballs. The cheeks were full and the lower half of the face was beautifully eclipsed by his dark beard and moustache. His brow centre bore the red crescent mark and his ears were decorated with hanging ear-rings of pearls. He stood as the highest authority of all the Puranic wisdom and his name is Suta. A bright red Kashmir shawl covered his shapely shoulders and exposed his wide chest. The border of the shawl was prominently decorated with milk white designs of jasmine bunches. Another one followed him and stood by his side. He was rather stout and sturdy and was of golden complexion. His lower garment glittered with folds of greenish yellow silk. Another silk garment was hanging above his left shoulder and below the right arm. He stood with a smile. Even without smile, his nose tip which stood prominent gave a deceptive appearance of a smile. On his face and shoulders and chest and belly he painted the twelve vertical brow marks, the emblem of Lord Vishnu's devotees. Thickly painted, the marks shone like the many beams of the increasing moon of Sarat. He was no other than Akrura. Suta wanted all of them to sit down and they had a leisurely time.

Akrura : " I await interview with your Vedavyasa, the son of my Guru. It is already three days since I reached this place. Still I am not able to meet this dweller of the mystic island ! What a change ! In those days when we

served Parasara, learning the Vedas, this son of Satyavati used to run on errands hither and thither to bring fuel and holy grass. Now today he stands as Vedavyasa. The proverb goes that poetry, woman and creepers have no expression without a support. Knowing this, our colleague, this Vyasa, had compiled a book out of the story of the battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas. He has the support of the king and he stands now as the celebrated author of a great epic. I very much long to see him in all his splendour and I came all the way to invite him once to our district."

Saunaka stood up and said: "We take delight in the unusual beauty of your conversations. We all take note of the fact that this great sage Vedavyasa neither approached for nor enjoyed the support of any royal court. Kings approach him and take refuge in his blessing and guidance. The sage favoured not his own relatives even! He stood away from the tide of human motives and his nature is one of compassion for all beings. He preached universal good and permeated it as his blessing for the welfare of all. He gave expression through his books, to the eternal law laid down by Lord Krishna. He meant every word of what he preached. Those who heeded to his advice were saved. Those who heeded not, perished. Neither favour nor spite he bears towards either of the lot. This is the Vyasa we know."

Suta: "This Akrura stands foremost among the self-offered devotees of his clan. He is known as the one who established the Vedic path. He too has a path of his own and a following of his own. Is it not better to give a patient hearing to his canons and intentions? I am sure of the presence of Vedavyasa today. Like Sri Krishna, he also feels duty bound to appear before those who await him in true devotion. The duration of waiting depends upon sincerity of purpose and whole-heartedness."

Akrura: "It seems my devotion falls short by three days. We hear that he is compiling his epic, the *Bhagavatam*. How is the progress?"

Saunaka : " The compilation of the tenth book is completed. The contents of the work run to twelve books in all. "

Suta : " One peculiar feature is that the first book is not yet compiled. "

Akrura : " Strange is the way. I hope the total import of the work is to tag down the essence of the Vedas and the concept of Narayana along with the biographical incidents of your Krishna. "

Saunaka : " In the prime of your age, there was a time when you too were much devoted to Lord Krishna. When Kamsa wanted to drag out the Lord to Madhura on the pretext of his Bow-Sacrifice, he found you suitable to bring the Lord. You went to Brindavan in great devotion and brought the Lord and his brother Balarama in your chariot. On the way you stopped to have a dip in the river and offer your daily prayers to the Lord. You stood in the running waters of the river and meditated upon the concept of Narayana, when the little Krishna made his appearance upon your mind's eye. You offered extempore prayers to Lord Krishna in divine rapture. All these incidents are already recorded in the tenth book. You are among the god-men and your story stands with the life incidents of the Lord as long as the sun and moon shine. It seems you find it funny that my Guru, Vedavyasa, has established Krishna as the incarnation of Vishnu. You find the same thing in the scripture compiled by your Guru, Parasara. He had commented upon the life of Sri Krishna in the light of Narayana's descent. Vedavyasa has depicted the biographies of all true devotees as the very expressions of the Lord Himself. I understand that you could accept Lord Krishna as the All-God, as long as he stayed at Brindavan. From the moment you met him and brought him to Madhura, you have developed your own school of thought about Vishnu's godhead. All these trends of your spiritual evolution have been recorded in the epic of Vedavyasa. "

Akrura : " We do accept that your Guru and you, his devotees, wield great power and wide renown. You

have grown prominent enough to create gods and fill them with life. We do accept all these things. The very fact that we approached your Guru and waited for him to get things done, itself proves the importance we give to him. Our portion of the Yadu land suffers from lack of rains. We came here to invite Vyasa to our land to bless the area and perform rituals for peace and appeasement, so that the land becomes fertile once again. We also propose to invite your Lord Krishna with due honour and splendour."

A young celibate sprang up from amidst others and said: "Your Holiness expects two birds at one shot. It seems you wanted to test the greatness of Vedavyasa and Lord Krishna at one and the same time. You invite them to perform rituals in worship of the various nature gods. Whether it rains or not depends upon your ritualistic injunctions prescribed for them. Had you invited either of them in full devotion and surrender, and had you left the problem to them, then there would have been no room for doubt. When Krishna treads the soil of his own accord, there is no question of anything not being fulfilled, not to speak of rains."

Akrura: "I too wanted to impress the same points upon the minds of the public. Still the Yadus have their own doubts about the matter. What can I do? Their stand is that if your Krishna has that much of greatness about him, why did it happen that he had requested Satrajit for the blessed sacred gem, Syamantaka?"

Saunaka: "Yes, You can find this incident also recorded in the scripture. The Syamantaka gem is having great powers that can be of much use to the public in general. Krishna only wanted to point out that it was proper to make an offer of this gem to the king, Ugrasena, where it would be of much use. It is not a fact that Krishna asked for the gem for himself. You remember that he had refused to receive the gem, when Satrajit himself offered it, a little later. Krishna only wanted to warn that it was not good for

persons to possess it, when they had no stature to possess it. Satrajit did not heed to the warning and the result was disastrous."

Akrura : "Even today, there are people who suspect that Krishna had taken away the gem."

Saunaka : "After the mysterious death of Prasena, the brother of Satrajit, you know the trend of events. Krishna took great pains to investigate into the matter. He succeeded in recovering the gem and restoring it safely to Satrajit. After that it was stolen and everyone knows about it. Satadhanva murdered Satrajit and stole the gem. This is known to all. On whose instigation had he done this? You were the one behind the scene and you had confessed it before the big audience. The incident, with due respects, is also recorded in the scripture. After all was said and done, your Guru Parasara knew what you were. He too had recorded the incident in his work."

Suta stood up and cut the conversation short and continued : "By birth everyone is great in his own way. Powers manifest through individuals according to the mission of one's own birth. This cannot be altered by mundane motives. No one can deny that Akrura had powers. It rained wherever he stayed. It stopped to rain in the place deserted by him. So goes the belief and experience of the Yadus. Now that the same Akrura complains about the absence of rains in his own place is too strange to understand. God's ways are mysterious. Powers inherited by birth survive as long as the motives tend to human welfare. It is by no means true that one can acquire powers through Mantra, Tantra or Yoga. There are persons born with powers and they stand for the welfare of all. Remember that powers are bestowed by one's own higher nature and they cannot be acquired by the effort of the personality."

Cool refreshing winds travelled towards the congregation and brought the message of gentle life through the medium of the hot sun. Mild gentle fragrance enlivened them. Suddenly

the atmosphere became cool since a moderate sheet of cloud gave them shelter. Indications show the approaching presence of Vedavyasa. There were traces of a small drizzle. Peacocks emerged out of the thickset leaves of the branches and they began to jump downwards with tails unfolded. Deer gathered into small herds and turned their faces towards the other end of the valley.

From a long distance of the other end beyond the horizon there was some one descending down the valley in swift strides. He appeared like a boy as he was surrounded by the herds of the deer. Now and then he stopped to do something for a while and proceeded. He crossed the valley in an incredibly short duration and began to climb up the steps. Now he appeared like a youth. He had an upper garment which he filled with bamboo rice. He took out the grain by handfuls and made the deer lick away directly from his hand. He came up the mountain and reached the cliff. He stood before the congregation in the shade of the banyan tree. An aged man of dark complexion, his head was covered by copper coloured hair in locks twisted and rolled round. All stood up in veneration and he made them sit again by his silent waving of the hand. He approached Akrura and looked into his eyes direct.

Akrura stood surprised for a few seconds and said : " Do you remember me ? "

Vyasa : " I do not fail to remember a face that is not cruel. I hope all are safe. Do the Yadus live in co-operation ? "

Akrura : " Co-operation ! It is a foreign element to the Yadus. The trouble with us is every one is great in his own way. "

Vyasa : " Nothing undersirable ! To those who are really great, this whole creation is their family. "

Akrura : " By the by, the Vedas describe Vishnu as the Lord Most High. I personally believe that it is always good

to worship Lord Vishnu and not to believe in any one of the human beings on earth. "

Vyasa : " All the beings on earth are nothing but shapes framed by the same Lord, who comes down to have an abode. Any school of thought that allows us to believe in the Omnipresence of the Lord in the frames is not against the Vedic path. Anyhow, I am happy to see you. The meaning of our life span is a continuous effort to make the land of Brahma live in continuous awareness of the Lord. "

Akrura : " You argue with me that human beings are but the frame of Narayana. But yet we see the degree of difference in their understanding. "

Vyasa : " Your mind grows aware of the degrees of difference and it shows the influence of Kali. Make me happy with some good news about the Yadus. "

Akrura : " We suffer from lack of rains from a long time. We wish you visit our place. "

Vyasa : " You wish that I bring down showers upon you. Simplicity of mind brings about purity, culminating in faith. Faith brings showers down to earth. "

Akrura : " No doubt. But I wish that you tread the soil of our area and perform rituals to bring down showers. "

Vyasa : " We do obey. We take the earliest opportunity to come there and perform the rituals for appeasing the gods. You have to bring down the showers, since you prescribe the rituals to that end. "

Akrura : " I have invited sages of age old wisdom, replete with the Vedic formulae. I wish you be the director of ceremonies in conducting the whole course of the sacrifice. The son of Vasudeva is also being invited with due respects and splendour. "

Vyasa : " You want to please the Lord by inviting Him. The only way to please Him is to venerate everyone who comes

to the ritual as His frame. This is one way. Another alternative is to invite Him as you have invited me and prescribe the rituals and the procedure. We follow you in either direction. Which way you choose depends on the will of the Lord. On the full moon day of the month of Magha, I will visit your place by foot."

Akrura : " People say that showers come down when the Virataparva of your *Mahabharata* is being chanted. After the ritual ceremonies are over, I also wish that you make a recital of the Virataparva to our people in a big boat floating on the waters of Yamuna."

Vyasa : " I will entrust Saunaka to do the needful. Today I very much like to eat along with you. I will offer fruits, milk and some roots. A little later, I have to cross the valley and return to my cave."

Chapter 6

The city of Dwaraka is a dyke built into the deep waters of the western ocean at the tip of Ghurjara. It was evening and the sunset reflected on the shores, keeping the perspective a bit gloomy and sombre. The water of the waves seemed to reflect some bloodshed. The wet sands of the shore appeared as if blood-stained. Day after day the evenings screened the beach with the darkness of twilight like a questionable environment. The dusk gave shelter to the subversive activity of some foreign fifth-columnists trying to infiltrate and infect the national spirit of the land. Fishermen served the role of a hospitable harbour for underground activities. A few boats stranded in the sands of the shore formed the congregational centres of this activity. Whispers and mutterings took place in one of the boats. Some youths from the native families of Yadu and Vrishni sat concealed in the boat, around an old missionary from Yavana. A few people were walking up and down the shore to protect privacy. The old preacher in the boat was lean and tall enough to resemble a skeleton of austerity. He wore a single garment extending right from the neck to the ankles. The emblem of the flying vulture representing the Yavana land decorated his breast. He was preaching his doctrines:

"The living being encaged in every human frame is absolutely independent by nature. Everyone is expected to achieve absolute independence in his ways of living. Without it man is no better than a beast. One who impedes the independence of others is the one who is really wicked. To

kill such a one contributes to the welfare of mankind. Whatever may be the cult, it is blind to bind souls in the name of regulations. Spiritual discipline is a phrase used to deceive people and entrap them into slavery. We deem it the work of God, our Deliverer, to enlighten people and set them free from the bonds of tradition. I have enough experience with all the existing cults. In the beginning of my career, I was one among those who recited the Vedas regularly. I had to spend twelve years to serve these Rishis in my attempts to know the ultimate Truth. I can read the Vedic texts independently. But what of the import? Whenever I asked the Rishis to teach me what was there in the Vedas, their answer was wrath and spite. They repeatedly tried to frighten me with curses. These Rishis have nothing to preach us except the Book of Rules full of restrictions. They kill the deer to sit upon its skin and meditate. They indulge in meat-eating and kill animals in the name of Vedic sacrifices. This is but a glorification of the baser instincts. They use spirituous liquor like all others, but they wish to call it Soma, the delicious drink of the gods. Again, they speak of peace, plenty and prosperity. Many are the reasons why I got fed up with these cults. Reciting the Veda without knowing the import is a waste. Conducting rituals, atonements and sacrifices without showing the proof of anything useful is nothing but a farce. What is required in its essence is to offer one's own heart and soul to God. This stands as truth for all times. To achieve this, so many restrictions are not necessary. If the statement that God is Love were to be true, then God never expects his children to fast, lie down on bare floor and subject themselves to all types of tortures. God gave us our food and clothing. If man disobeys God, and tries to keep himself naked, half naked in the name of austerity, it is *uncouth*. If man tries to please God by wearing ash or brow mark on his face, it must be an ugly God. The truth is that beauty is the very expression of God."

Krishna's children were also present among those who listened to the preaching. Samba, a son of Krishna, was

shrewd and a bit discrete. He said : " Growing the beard and moustache is also as much ugly. It is one of the features of these Rishis. You belong to a cult which has no place for such things. How is it that you too have a long beard and bushy moustache ? "

The skeleton-like old Guru gently nodded his head which was quite like a skull. No trace of flesh was left on his face and it quite resembled the skull with many holes. He looked through his dismal eyes, as if through two deep holes. His laughter produced sounds of a crow. He took time to recapitulate a befitting answer, while he laughed with Saturnian slowness. Then he said : " You are really wise. A worthy son of a wise father ! The shrewdness of your father Krishna made the Rishis call him their God. You are his son and it is but natural that you are wise. Can a tiger give birth to a deer ? Really I take delight in your subtle way of understanding things. The seed of your wisdom lies in your father, who could lead a life of all comfort, keeping his devotees pious with all the tortures of austerities. This beard of mine has its birth and growth in the land of Brahma itself. When I came here first, I had no beard and moustache, but nobody cared to listen to my preachings. In this land, nobody has a right to preach without a beard. The more odd and uncouth in apparel, the more one is considered superhuman. It is the taste of the land. If you stop eating food and begin to eat the root and the leaf, you are known as a Rishi and you will be appreciated. So I started my career first by having a tuft of hair with a knot behind my head. I secured a sacred thread on my shoulder and made myself fit to receive the Vedas. Then I went to Pratisthana and trained myself in Vedic chanting from the orthodox Brahmins of Maharashtra. These fishermen gave me food and shelter in those days. With their help I established myself and I have grown my long beard and moustache. So stand I as the Guru of these fishermen. They all come from distant shores and they are ill-treated by the natives. Their clan is excommunicated in

the name of Daasas. They came here long ago for fishing and trading in marine products. They live by manual labour and they are to be appreciated. The sons of the land of Brahma have no soft corner for them. They ill-treat them and insult them. Even the pearls they purchase from these fishermen, they do not touch without getting them washed in holy water. Under such conditions, it is but natural that the fishermen developed contempt. They have developed a poor opinion of these natives. The doctrine of Yavana says that all men are the children of God, and it is a great sin to insult a section of humanity. To us, this is unbearable. In the name of God, I stood in all support to these men of hard labour. They liked my preachings as you do now. Remember that every heart craves for happy living and absolute freedom. A heart which understands such craving is really noble. Such a heart will have no second thought to appreciate the teachings of our Guru, the propounder of the cult of Yavanas.

“I have studied the ins and outs of these Rishis through decades. I too was under the illusion for some time that these Rishis possessed powers to bless and curse. I wanted to know the truth of it. I joined as one of the disciples of Durvasa. Being incapable, he is indignant. He knows the moods of others and studies the situation well. He can successfully frighten those who come under his spell. Many times I heard him boast that he had cursed even Krishna. Once, it seems, he visited the house of Krishna and was honoured with all types of foods. He was given an enormous quantity of a delicious pudding which he ate and ate. Much of it was left and Durvasa demanded that Krishna should smear it all over the body of the sage. Krishna obeyed and it seems that a part of Durvasa's foot was left unsmear. Then Durvasa cursed Krishna with a prophecy that peril of life awaits Krishna near his toe. Durvasa has the audacity to narrate this ugly behaviour of his in many situations. If such a behaviour supplemented by a beard and a moustache can make a Rishi, then what to speak of seerhood and piety?

This land needs religious revolution to the very sinews. Untimely death had stretched its tongue towards my Guru, the father of the Yavana cult. Had it not been so, my Guru would have succeeded in bringing enlightenment to the beings of this land with the help of Raktasarma and Lokayata. His plans aimed at universal good. It was under his guidance that the great Kala Yavana invaded the land of the Yadus. Krishna himself had to run away and hide himself in the dark cave, where Muchikunda lived. Krishna could manage to see that Muchikunda murdered Kala Yavana in darkness. Then Krishna came out with Muchikunda and presented the murder in a different light. He made people believe that the death of Kala Yavana was the result of the Yogic powers of Muchikunda. Muchikunda was saved from the guilt of murder and he had no other way except praising Krishna as his Saviour and Deliverer. Our Samba, the son of Krishna, has an objective way of looking at things. Hence he does not take anything amiss in my remarks. Noble is he, who can swallow truth, though unpalatable. I have seen Durvasa through and through in all his attitudes and motives. It is true that he has no other powers except frightening a few. You can test the truth of my statement by once gathering around and insulting him in the presence of many. I do not repent calling him an impertinent boor, who could unduly insult the noble host, whose hospitality he had enjoyed. It might be out of humility or fear of public opinion that Krishna had to put up with him. Our Samba and others have no reason to excuse him."

Gada: "Gurudev! You are habituated to alcohol. Is it fit for a religious preacher to indulge in alcohol?"

Preacher: "In its true perspective, alcohol has a religious value. It keeps the mind above the fluctuations of the events, when properly used. Many among your Yadus use alcohol. Balarama is the only one among your clan who knows the Tantric secrets of alcohol. For the matter of that, many of the Rishis use it but they give it a pious colouring. They call it Soma when they use it in

rituals. They try to attain Samadhi with the help of the hot drink. The pity is they do not know the proper measure. Many of the Tantric texts speak of the various spiritual uses of the spirituous liquid. I assure you that no one can achieve anything above the level of the common herd, without alcohol and beef."

Pradyumna: "Don't you see that meat-eating involves killing?"

Preacher: "A Himalayan blunder prevalent in the Himalayan land! Eating vegetables also involves as much of killing. Like many others of your country, you too believe that killing plants is a less violent sin than killing animals. The inhabitants of the land of Brahma have no precise understanding of the issue. The doctrine of the Yavanas has a philosophy of its own and it has the right solution to present. God made man and wanted him to eat. God created plants and animals for man to eat. It is explained that the plant, the animal, the bird and the fish do not possess souls. God sent man to earth with a soul. He has created the beings in such a way that man cannot live without eating the plant or the beast."

Samba: "One can eat the fruit of the tree without killing the tree. So too one can use milk and its products from the animal without killing the animal. When such a thing is possible, man has no justification to have the fetish to kill. For your information, my father, who is honoured by all, accepts the dishes prepared without killing the animal or the plant. Now he is a hundred and twenty-five years of age and he is strong and healthy."

The preacher began to brood silently. When no answer was forthcoming, Samba remarked: "Some of your preachings are acceptable to us, while others are not."

Preacher: "It is a sure sign of self-independence and hence it is healthy not to accept all the views of anyone. Habit makes people accept or reject. Many times habit does

not carry any grain of truth. Tradition steers habit. Through generations, habit becomes acceptable and is enthroned as truth. The grouping of your society into the four divisions and the four stages of life is a living example of a custom enshrined as truth."

Gada : "The same argument holds good with your doctrines. Through generations you are brought up in the light of your age old doctrines. For the same reason your habit makes you feel that your doctrines are true."

Preacher : "That is why we believe that the truth of anything is known only to God and not man. To you, people, the authenticity of truth depends upon the opinions of the Rishis. To us, the appeal to the pure conscience decides the standards. In the light of our conscience, we preach our doctrines. We assert that truth cannot be known beyond this."

Gada : "Somehow this approach is most appealing to me."

Preacher : "I am glad. Now it is two Ghatls after sunset. I offer to you the most delicious and costly drink on the eve of our departure. I do not mean that you should all drink. Those who do not drink may abstain. All others can give me the pleasure of sharing with me."

The roar of the sea is heard with amplified modulations, when many of the youth among the Yadus accepted the drink. The stars of the dark skies show staggering gait, as they reflected on the waves in darkness. The Yadu youths adjourned the discussions and dispersed from the boat. They walked along the dark shore and entered the city of Dwaraka. The Yavana Preacher retired for a respite into the boat itself. The boat was his hermitage at night. During the day he went round the streets of the city and gathered the required information. He made reports in the form of letters and slipped them into the hands of the fishermen, who in their turn carried them to other cities and handed them over carefully to the dwarfs, who were foreign messengers. They took them and

travelled on mules by turns and at last they delivered them to the Yavana leaders who wait at the hilly tracks of the North West frontier. These Yavana leaders, guided by the information, plan for infiltrating into the land. For this, they use spirituous drinks, gold coins and the ladies of Yavana.

Chapter 7

A myriad galaxies of various shapes, exhaling twinkling starlight, looked like heaps of diamond filings. This was the perspective seen through the frame of the westward window. The night sky of the new moon appeared like a locked dark-room, the storehouse of myriads of solar systems. The Great Architect of the Universe unlocks the room during the night of every new moon. He takes out a handful of star-dust to sow seeds of the future solar systems. For fifteen days hence these seeds wax into full-fledged suns with increasing phases of light, like the many increasing phases of the moon. On the sixteenth day it is the full moon phase of these suns. By that time, each of the solar systems created enjoys the fullness of light, all the planetary planes, fully developed. It will be the full moon of that unit creation. In the solar systems, each of them stands with all the sixteen moon phases unfolded. From the next day onwards, the phases begin to wane. Again they face their new moon, when all the solar systems lose their light and merge into the background darkness. Again the Great Architect brings out another handful of star-dust from the dark-room as the next unit creation.

The period between a new moon and a full moon comprises the fourteen Manvantaras for the inhabitants of our earth. The next phase after the new moon forms the first Manvantara, ruled by the Swayambhuva Manu. The following thirteen phases comprise the next thirteen Manvantaras for the beings of our earth. They form the moon phases of the Great Architect in his own scale. The

first phase forms the new moon and is presided over by the Lord God himself as its Manu. He lifts up the whole creation out into the objective stir from the darkness of subjectivity. Then he is called the incarnation of the Great Boar. His next Manvantara is the first of the fourteen Manus. After that the Lord once again shines in his phase of the full moon and his light includes all the sixteen phases. Then he kindles every atom of this creation into his awareness, when he is called Vasudeva, the living Lord, who comes down to earth and walks with man. This sixteenth phase forms the nodal point of the cycle, when the earth globe of every solar system begets him as its child in flesh.

Lord Krishna recollected that it was himself, whom when he gazed at the perspective of the western skies of the new moon, which was spread over the roaring darkness of the waves of the sea. He saw and smiled. It was the new moon day to all the sons of our earth, while the broader time measure of the whole solar system showed the full moon phase of the Kartika month. Trying to bring to the beings of our earth the awareness of the full moon, he has been giving his flute music since his childhood. Those who could bathe in the light of the full moon through this vast sweep of the solar unit time, made their appearance as the cowherd families of the Vraja village. They could walk with him and take part in his play of life through the nights and days of the years of his childhood. They played with him on the banks of the Yamuna's, amidst the many retreats of foliage and the pathways in the gardens of Brindavan. There they played, immersed in ecstasies, as the many flowers blossoming in moonshine. They lived merged in the many notes of his flute music. Since the number of human frames on earth is limited, some of them came down as deer, some as peacocks, some as cows and calves, while the others lived as the fruit trees, the fruits, the creepers, the twigs and the buds and the bunches of flowers, which nodded their heads in rapture to the life-giving waves of winds that travelled over the ripples of the Yamuna.

The days and nights which he had spent in the village of Vraja during his childhood came to his mind's eye. He remembered the day when he started to leave Brindavan to accompany Akrura to Madhura. It was a heart-rending scene when the cow-herds, their children and their youthful ladies of pastoral innocence and the cows and calves, waited across the way to stop the chariot and not to allow him to go. They were about to be harsh with Akrura, when the Lord smiled and consoled them all saying, "I will return to see you all once again." They believed and the promise still awaits fulfilment. Poor innocent souls, the inhabitants of the cow-herd village could not understand what the Lord meant by his return and how many thousands of human earth years it would take for them to witness the return. Had they been a bit worldlywise, they would not have at all allowed him to escape to Madhura.

As the Lord left Brindavan, he was forced to conduct himself differently in his ways of leading the herds of living creatures. All of them were not cows by nature, nor were they the innocent cow-herd souls. Though he was playing on his flute, and showering the melodies of his soul music to make them experience the full moon phase of Sarat, it was not being received by them in its true spirit. Those souls who lived with him belonged to diverse moon phases. Kuvalayapeeda, Channura, Mustika, Kamsa, Jarasandha, Sisupala, Dhritarashtra, Paundraka, Salva, Ekalavya, Hamsa and Dibhaka belonged to the cruel aspects of the moon phases. Kalayavana belonged to the fourteenth cruel moon phase and he tried to walk along with the darkness of the culminating new moon, which was disruptive of the law and which filled the minds with darkness deep. Karna, Sakuni, Charvaka, Raktasarma, Duryodhana and his brothers represented the red and the dark streaks of the cruel moon phases. Through the instrumentality of such souls, the wheel of time rendered bloodshed inevitable and it effected the destruction of the Maha Bharata war. Strong likes and dislikes and the emotional gushes of covetedness, indolence and beastliness found their way into the inevitability of serving as

the bolts on the parts of the windmill of creation. Its rotation needed them as fittings. They too formed the components of the law of creation. They come down as traits in flesh and blood to earth. No one could comprehend the origin and the culmination of these beings effecting the revolution of the wheel of time. Every one could see a part of the wheel according to his own role in it. He was in doubt whether he could comprehend the rotation of the wheel in all its detail. It stood always concealed by the petals of the lotus of his intentions ever-expanding. It was all concealed like a lotus bud which had its location in his own solar plexus. It was within himself and how could he comprehend it even for himself? When it was part of himself, there was no need for comprehending. Was it at all necessary that he should comprehend it? He smiled to himself. Those who tried to comprehend it got themselves entangled in the meshes of their own patterns of intelligence, which they called systematic knowledge. Then they found themselves enmeshed in it. After a process of some struggle, they drifted along the divergent channels of time like the many weeds in the river stream.

As he visualised the whole process, he gazed at the outlines of the many galaxies. The whole combination of the star clusters appeared before him like a young lady of eighteen in the attire of an ascetic. The darkness amidst the clusters of stars appeared as her upper garment made of tiger skin. She stood there. Her smiling face, the half-closed third eye on her brow, her delicate hands and arms which resembled the lotus reeds; her left hand with the Kamandalu and the rosary of lotus beads and her right hand holding the trident. The red star-dust with its many twisting coils appeared like the delicate red Valkala around her breast. About her there appeared the many weapons brilliant, the noose, the bow with the five darts, the axe, the thunderbolt and the club, twice twinkled in the yonder skies. There was also the bowl of liquor on one side. On the other side, there was the mace, the heavy rod of iron,

The total form of the Daughter of the Mount gave its presence with all her sixteen phases. It was the complete wisdom of the Archetype of the Divine Woman. It was through the new moon of the sons of the earth that she gave her presence of the full moon. All the moon phases emanated from her, as the various different modes of the created beings. The phases spread as the tiny rays of the stars which disappeared into the darkness and escaped as the five pulsations down to this earth. They stealthily descended as the many streams of life into the spines of the living beings. They made their way into the vertebral columns and established their Ashrams, six in number in each vertebral column. Each Ashram included a Manu, the Seven Sages and the four Kumaras gathering in assembly and serving as the very witnesses of the Earth-karma. The cosmic form-frame of the Mother which is Eternal comes down to earth as her own smile. On this earth, it is experienced as His own smile and spread as His flute music. It worked as the Music of the Soul to flood them, but the sons of the earth could experience only the darkness of the new moon.

He gazed at the Cosmic form-frame through the window and experienced the familiar darkness as his own form-frame. He could see some beings moving and coming down from the noose, the hook, and the other weapons. As they came down, they stood around him bowing down in veneration and with folded hands. The Noose came down as Glamour, the Hook came down as Wrath and the Rod came down as the Angel of Death. Jealousy, Malice and Old Age also came down as Angels from the other weapons. The Angel of Death bowed down in veneration and said: "My Lord, the Lord of the Beings! You kept us all in the midst of prolonged periods of darkness. Can we at all dream that you too look down upon us as the many other beings do? We cannot believe that Indra and his god of Light along with the Planetary Lights are your favourites, while we are not. You assured us repeatedly that we too have a role to play in creation along with the gods and the Rishis. We live in that hope and we cling to our own

existence all the while. We very much desire that you should use us as your means to fulfil your mission. All the frail beings of this creation are continuously stricken with fear and sorrow. They live as the creatures of their self-projected sorrows. What is it that we can accomplish by approaching them, the helpless ones? As they think of us, they get frightened and run into the bottomless pit of death. We, the powers of Glamour and Wrath try to take shelter in some of them. Before we do so, they turn wicked. They do not dare leave their lot to us. They rush to create their own evil Karma and are swept off into the ocean of self-conditioning. The Angel of Ego stands as your Deputy in every one that lives on earth. He is our foremost leader. Even he is not able to fulfil his mission. Here he stands dumbfounded. Only one among us marches on with courage and fulfils his mission in silence. He is your favourite Deputy, the Angel of Habit.

"We are not here to suggest your plan, yet we have something to say. Your frame is the only comprehensive abode of all the planes of creation. It is the only pattern that can stand as the arena of all that you have ordained us to do. We wish you permit us to find our place in your frame and to accomplish our lot. It is your merry child's play that you hold this frame of yours. Those, who have progressed along your path, have your physical presence as their prop. They stopped halfway by being aware of your presence and they do not progress further as long as they notice the presence of this frame of yours. They stopped halfway in their journey through your Omnipresence. They now believe that you are also one among them. As the buds of their wisdom begin to blossom, there is the worm of ignorance eating them from within. This is in accordance with their past associations stimulated by the Angel of Habit. In your play, you have manifested this frame of yours to their presence through a tolerably long period of one hundred and twenty-five years. Captivating their eyes with the beauty of your frame, you have conducted the Drama of

Creation among those who are blinded by your physical presence. In course of time, they have grown better and better as actors, while they could not comprehend their fulfilment. They remained as mere seasoned actors, rather than those who could solve the riddle of their own existence. See how the fish in the lake are deceived by the reflection of the full moon on the ripples of the lake! The presence of the reflection makes the fish think of it as a kind of prey for them to chase. See how the fish swim and float and flutter for the subsistence of their optical illusion. See how they wait and wait to eat from it and how they die in the end. When once the full moon is eclipsed, then the reflection disappears and there is the new moon. Then at least these fish-like beings turn back and begin to run after their real food, which sustains them. In the meanwhile, there is once again the sunrise before which many a century of the mortal years should pass. May this opportunity be given to us. We know how unpleasant it is for us to discharge this duty. We know the glamour we have for your physical frame. Even the Goddess of Superior Nature has so much of liking for your physical frame which ever remains an unsolvable mystery. This Goddess of Nature, this Daughter of the Mount, has the highest regard and love for the beauty of your physical frame. The beauty that she has bestowed upon it shows her unbound love and mercy. She has kept your delicate body as the meeting ground of hundreds of thousands of Madanas. They celebrate everyday, the procession of their march towards your fellow beings, with your smiles as the many arrows of enticement. In fact, we do not wish to touch your beauty. Our life is but a surrender and dedication to your will. If we have so much of glamour for your beauty, what to speak of these living beings, who live away their life, driven by motives? The very fact that your frame, hundred and twenty-five years old, still shines fresh and tender shows the amount of love the Mother Goddess has for you. We know how cruel it is to tamper with this body of yours. Still we do not shirk

it, because there is no other way for these Yadus to get redeemed and liberated. Their very existence is entangled by their own previous associations and they live in the darkness of their own. It is imperative that they should feel the total absence of your body. Even their own present bodies are the stone-hard crystals of their past deeds. They cannot dream of enjoying their awareness unconditioned before they come out of these physical sheaths for the time. If they are to begin to grow further, they have to leave these sheaths and find themselves in better bodies. Have pity over these creatures of conflict and intrigue. We pray, you cast your merciful look upon them ! ”

As the Angel of Death uttered so, all the other angels bowed down to the Lord and folded their hands. The Lord smiled and bestowed on them the gesture of Abhaya (fearlessness) with his right hand. Then they disappeared. The Lord experienced all these things as his own thoughts and smiled to himself. It is all Maya, the Great Illusion, the Grand Play. No one knows if the illusion gained the upper hand over him any day and even the Lord Himself could not say anything about it. One thing he could say, whenever he allowed the Illusion to play with him, she always gained the upper hands. The Lord looked through the westward window. The starry sky shone like the inverted bowl with many holes. The path appeared foggy and smoky, since the grey path of the eastern horizon before dawn was reflected in the west.

Chapter 8

"I am the Knower of this Grand Person, whose name shines through the Darkness of Objectivity. The undisturbed import of this name weaves out of itself all the forms and names and He lives through the Utterance of His own name."

The prayer was being chanted into the space according to the music of its utterance. It was dawn and the chanters, men and women, stood in two rows after taking their dip in the holy lake. They offered handfuls of holy water which symbolize their tiny span of life to the rising sun on the day of the new moon. They are all the youths of Yavana, standing ankle-deep in the lake of Siddhashram. Previously, it was the Ashram of Charvaka and it was transformed into Siddhashram three years ago during the night of the full moon of the Margaseersha month, when the Lord had made a ritual sacrifice of his Presence through the music of His soul. Since then, Lokayata and Ganadasa served as the preceptors, who trained the Yavanas, Sakas, Parasikas and the Barbaras. They trained them into the Eternal Wisdom of the Vedas and made them perfect. Students from Panchala, Sindh, Nepal and Jambu and Kashmir also joined these foreigners to get themselves trained in the Vedas. Pratichi was perfected in her training during these three years. Now she is one of the instructors of spiritual wisdom for the Westerners. Since then, the west winds blow cooler towards the land of Brahma, so say the celibates of the Ashram.

There were many beautiful images in the lake where they had their holy dip in the morning. Previously there were

nudes, when the Ashram belonged to Charvaka. Now they are replaced by the images of Lord Krishna playing on his flute. These images were kept around the lake. In the centre of the lake, there was a small altar upon which stands the image of Lord Siva sporting a smile, wearing his usual crown of twisted hair. From the crown of its head there is the perennial spray of spring water directly arranged from the sacred river Ganga. The nudes which were there previously were converted into well-dressed Angels by Lokayata through his power of magic, three years ago and now these damsels move about the Ashram and protect it with their invisible presence. Now they work as the matrons of the Ashram. Under their supervision none of the pupils could misbehave.

As Lokayata listened to the Vedic chant of offering, his face brightened with hope and radiance. It is really incredible that the foreigners could attain such perfection within these three years. For chanting the Veda in a perfect way is not a joke even to a native of this land. All the pupils dispersed after the prayer. They went to their cottages, clad themselves in pure attire and gathered again in the assembly hall. Lokayata appeared on the dais and all stood up in veneration, with folded hands. Lokayata appeared ripe in old age. He invited Ganadasa to occupy the chair on the dais, garlanded him, gave him his blessing and said, "I have almost lived out my span of life. Today, being the new moon, is a holiday. On this auspicious day, I appoint Ganadasa as the head of our Ashram. I entrust to him all the branches of wisdom, I know. This pious soul Ganadasa is wise enough to hold the chair and train the natives and the foreigners into the Vedic wisdom, practical and theoretical. My blessing runs through his veins across the many new moons and full moons."

Ganadasa stood up and touched the feet of Lokayata in veneration. Lokayata invited Pratichi on to the dais and presented her with the flowers offered to Lord Krishna. Then he said, "This Pratichi was born with this Ashram and was brought up here. She knows all the stages of the evolution of this Ashram. Henceforth, she will take care of the celibate

women of this Ashram. She shall play an important role in training the virgins of the East and the West in the Vedic wisdom. She hands down to them the ethical and the spiritual law of this land. She is to perform the initiation or the sacred thread ceremony to these virgins. This year the Kali age begins. The influence of Kali makes people believe that the Vedic initiation is prohibited for ladies. But Pratichi stands beyond the influence of Kali and continues the tradition of initiating ladies into the Vedic wisdom. Is it not strange that so many of the foreigners get initiated into the Vedas, while some of the Brahmin families of this land are becoming Mlecchas by turning away from the Vedic path? When some of our souls are fallen some others among the foreigners are being raised, it seems that the number of the enlightened ones always remains the same. As the wheel of sun time rotates, the sun of Vedic wisdom rises in the hearts of some opening their eyes of understanding to wisdom, while it sets in others closing their vision in darkness and slumber. The Sun God may seek to bless everyone with the light of his grace. But some have hearts like the lotuses that open up to his light while others have hearts like the water lilies that open up at night and close their petals at dawn, when the Sun God accepts his defeat in attempting to make all the hearts blossom at a time what of our abilities and our work? Our hope always lies in the presence of the music of the soul, which the Lord plays through his flute. It is only our effort that keeps us pure. Discharging one's duty is chiefly a means to purify and save oneself from fall and has nothing to do with one's failure or success in obtaining the fruits thereof. When some souls go down into darkness and some souls come up into light, it is our privilege to work as the implements of the latter. It is the fortune of the inhabitants of our Siddhashram. The appearance of Djwhalkhul worked out the light of the full moon, even during the darkness of the new moon. Now that he has finished his work here and receded, there seems to be a vacant look in some of our people. Djwhalkhul is supposed to have returned to his physical body in the name of Girisarma, the grandson of

Sudama, Pratlchi and some others appear disheartened over this. It should not be so. He is protecting our Ashram even from a distance. Be courageous, hold fast and continue the work through the hard spell of the Kali age. I take leave of you and retire into the valleys of the Satasringa hills. Before my aged body falls me and before my mind loses its grit, I will reach the highest cliff of Satasringa and make my body comfortable in Padmasana. Then I will make it float in the air out into the valley. Then I will come out of my body and cast it down into the valley. Test yourselves if you are still attached to my physical presence. If you still find some limitations in yourselves try to outgrow them not fighting the limitations, but by living in the Lord through meditation."

As Lokayata uttered these words, tears rolled up in the eyes of all. Initially all felt dizzy but it was followed by a spell of spiritual ecstasy and everyone was lost to his surroundings. All of them were blessed with the same vision in their minds; a pair of mountains appeared at a distance with a valley between them. From beyond the valley all heard the flute-music. After a time, all regained their normal consciousness. No tears in their eyes. All opened their eyes. A thundering voice was heard from somewhere outside.

"It is wrong to believe that I left this place and went to Kusasthali. Everyone among you is privileged to call on me in your mind. I shall be anywhere I am needed. I can stay at Kusasthali or here or in the Nilagiris or in the caves of Sravasti. Everyday I visit all these four places. Wherever I am, I dictate my precepts in the form of my commentaries on the one great scripture. You can hear my voice and learn the commentaries. I am well-versed in the elaborate commentary given by the sage Maru on the Vedic hymns of the mystic fire. Everyday I repeat the passages of the commentaries which you can take down as my treatise on the cosmic fire. Any one of you can sit in meditation and write down my teaching."

So saying, Djwhalkhul entered by the doorway. His eyes shone with the brilliance of the Vedic fire hymns. They

glowed as the many sunbeams of the morning. Lokayata felt immensely happy to see Djhwalkhul on the occasion of his leaving the Ashram. Then again Lokayata addressed the audience :

“Here comes the sly young fellow. He came to our Ashram as a disciple and has grown into a Guru of the Gurus. In his presence, Gurus became disciples and this disciple became a Guru. This is the culmination of Brahma vidya. His playful fearless eyes emanate the embers of the mystic light of the Vedic hymns. It is the light which saves the East and the West from the darkness of the Kali age. This sage, Djhwalkhul shines like the sun during the day and like the sacred fire during the night in radiating the eternal light of Brahma.”

Chapter 9

"I wish you go deep into the matter. There seems to be some strange confusion or the other in the kitchen now-a-days. The Brahmins in the kitchen are trusted old cooks and are experienced. Nothing could be wrong with them. I had them interrogated and tested in many ways. Still something goes wrong everyday and it is not easy to account for it. Why, there is no better expert than myself in cooking. I personally took care of every aspect of cooking and still something goes wrong. Fresh vegetables rot within an hour after they are gathered from the farms and smell foul. Fruits emit the smell of rotten meat in no time. I see no error on the part of our cooks. There is some pollution in the atmosphere and everything edible is being affected. I can see the mischief of approaching Kali at work as given out in the reading of our astrologers. Rice in the bags seems turned into worms that crawl out of the bags and it is awful. Wheat undergoes discoloration and looks anaemic. Rats and moles multiply in numbers every night in the storehouse and eat away the food-grains in the night leaving nothing but husk by morning. Metal containers of foodgrains are also found gnawed and bitten away by rats."

Bhima said as he arranged a big royal dinner plate on the round table before Yudhisthira. Bhima's hands were shaking a little with age as he carried the plate. He served the items freshly prepared by himself and invited Yudhisthira to dine at once. He said, "Oh, Worshipful Lord! We honour you as the very embodiment of law. I wish you dine first, while the

others can afford to eat later. Our queen Drowpadi and our brothers wait to touch their meals only after you start eating.

Yudhisthira : " My dear brother ! The constellation of the Great Bear is passing through the asterism Magha. It is the time when such evil omens manifest themselves and the Kali age begins. So say the astrologers. I too feel my outlook and equanimity much disturbed. "

Bhima : " May be because you've grown too old. "

Yudhishtira : " There seems to be something more. Everyday I am anxious to seek Krishna, our Lord. I very much wish that Krishna should stay in our city of Hastina, ever before our eyes. Whenever I think of Krishna, some of our hounds bark in a mournful hideous tone. I do not know why. My mind refuses to think of the affairs of the state. Day by day, I feel it imperative to instal our young Parikshit on the throne. Today is the new moon, the last day of the month of Kartika. Towards the end of the darker half of Phalguna month, we are going to witness a total solar eclipse. On that day, the last three moon phases occur all in one day. So say the astronomers. Such a phenomenon occurred thirty-six years ago and it was immediately followed by the global war in which eighteen Akshauhinis of army were annihilated along with Dhritarashtra's family. Whenever there is an unusual phenomenon about a new moon, something undesirable is expected to follow. There may be an earthquake, an erosion or a tidal wave. There may be a foreign invasion. These are all the portents of astrologers. He always banks upon the presence of our Lord, Krishna, for any mode of dispensation. All the planes of existence follow his will. We have his grace in the form of our Parikshit's mysterious survival. "

Bhima : " Some of the provinces continuously suffer from lack of rains. The rulers of Gandhara, Vanga and Kikata provinces are growing weaker owing to internal feuds. A cheap taste for groupism and the formation of various rival parties prevails in the people. Some of the orthodox

Brahmin and Kshatriya families in our land crave for marital relations with the traders or the fishermen, who came from abroad and settled here. The merchant class are seeking now channels of filthy trade. They establish hotel trade which was not there in our lands hitherto. Some provincial and administrative officers try to plunder the wealth of agriculturists in the name of procurement of food grains. Agriculture as a profession is being made more and more impossible. Criminals manage to occupy responsible posts in the Government and begin to rob the people of their wealth with the help of their own groups. They inflict punishments upon the agriculturists of our villages for not selling them the food grains they had preserved for themselves. Some of them try to deceive people by representing money as the real wealth and teaching them how to accept and manipulate bribes. This creates difficulties in the distribution of foodstuffs. The villages are obsessed with dread of poverty everywhere. The spirit of charity and mutual help is vanishing.

Of late, people dare not distribute food grains to those who follow the various manual professions in the villages. They prefer to pay everything in cash as they do it in the cities. Those of various professions in the villages grow more and more money-minded and the incentive to work is lost. Lust for money makes public irresponsible and trains them how to shun work. Employment has dwindled into subordination and slavery. People withdraw gradually from professions and seek employment with those who possess money. One's own profession is replaced by paid labour which involves no responsibility. The foreigners from the North-West seize this opportunity to purchase people and wealth with gold. The people of various professions bear antagonism towards the natives of their own land. Slogans are being raised to the effect that the land should be ruled by foreigners. People are made to believe that foreign rule is better. Against the national spirit, we hear slogans about cow-slaughter and beef-eating. Without cow-slaughter there

will be shortage of food, they say. One preceptor from the land of the Yavanas made an assembly of Brahmana and Kshatriya youths near the Raivataka mountain. In the assembly, he planned the first demonstration of cow-slaughter. Sahadeva came to know of it in advance, took a band of police officers and imprisoned the Yavana preceptor. He had the assembly dispersed and stopped the demonstration of cow-slaughter. Strange to note, wives go to the Court of Law against their husbands, which was unprecedented. Some rulers and chieftains became so money-minded that they had disbanded many families of royal court dancers in the name of economy and turned them to the streets. These courtesans get themselves employed in rich hotels and lodging houses as prostitutes for fair salaries. Some rulers have grown miserly and dismissed many families from their service. These servants now go about the corners of big cities killing and robbing the public.

"Rulers try to shield their inefficiency by advertising many schemes in the name of amenities for the public. They establish house building and town planning societies, to divert the minds of the public. They swindle public money and have their own shares with the contractors and the engineers. Even the universities like Takshasila, Gomati and Manipura resort to such methods. They collect money from the public and divert the funds from the treasury to construct big buildings, towers and gateways. The officers who are appointed to check the corruption join hands with these societies and grab their share. Even the Vedic scholars and the professors began selling their wisdom and teaching for a few chips. Some of the Brahmins have stopped imparting Vedic wisdom to their children. They get their children educated into the many job-oriented courses. They want their children to live as servants of the rich royal families."

Yudhishtira was pondering on what Bhima reported. He finished his lunch in a reflective, pensive mood. He washed his hands and feet and came into the central hall.

He relaxed on the luxurious couch of satin, when Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva joined him in the after-lunch talk. The attendant maids stood towards the right of each of them, cleaning betel leaves and making ready rolls of pan with nut powder, camphor, saffron and lime of the pearl. The brothers were enjoying the pan, while Bhima took leave to finish his lunch.

Arjuna : "The visits of Rishis to royal courts are becoming less and less frequent. Their custom of expounding the law to kings and princes is passing out. Only Brahmin scholars who are interested in royal gifts continue to frequent the royal courts. But the court of Lord Krishna in Dwaraka still enjoys the visit of Rishis. Some of the Yadu chiefs perform spiritual austerities with all their holy pomp. Some of them style themselves as masters of their own prescribed path of Yoga and they crave to be recognised as Gurus. Akrura is busy in his own way along this path. He levels bitter criticism against Vedavyasa and some other sages of renown. Durvasa came to know of Akrura's remarks and grew furious about it. He bears spite against the Yadu clan. Once again he intends to visit Dwaraka to take the consent of Krishna for destroying those who criticise Rishis.

A few of the Yadu youths have evinced keen interest in the teachings of the Yavana preachers and they take delight in propagating them. They argue that the Vedic rites are not needed for the purification of mankind. It is better, they say, that people leave off the Puranas and the Vedas and take to some kind of meditation on the God-principle. In their view God is an abstraction. Purity of thought is the only requisite to get at the law of God ; daily bath is also not imperative. Some of these youths assure us that they are Siddhas and they can impart mundane and spiritual happiness when one meditates upon them. Their pictures are enough for the devotees to invoke their presence and ward off all ills. These so-called adepts indulge in unhealthy competition with such others. Every pseudo-Guru is busy in trying to destroy the pictures of the other Gurus, and installing his

own. It seems that picture-making industry is thriving more in consequence. Hotels and brothel houses contain rooms which enshrine these pictures, since it is believed that thereby their business would thrive. Often these fake Gurus visit such places and receive honours and gifts. Since there are no restrictions and austerities in their "paths" people are flocking to them in hundreds and thousands in the name of meditation and Yoga. Just by purchasing one picture they are assured of their emancipation. The atheists and agnostics exploit this state of affairs to capture the attention of the public, conduct seminars and seek to prove the worthlessness of the whole spiritual culture. They have the financial support of the foreigners in all this. Day by day, the moral standards of the public are going down and we find no way to prevent the moral decay.

Nakula : "The most effective measure is to invite all the real sages of wisdom and conduct a congregational ritual. No doubt these sages have been conducting such seminars and congregations for a long time, but they are doing so in the midst of the forest or on the top of a mountain. The common man has no access to them. It is time to conduct such gatherings in the heart of the cities. We wish that our emperor Yudhishtira would conduct a seven-day congregation of all the sages on a national scale."

Sahadeva : "These modern fake Gurus should also be invited to attend it. I will tear their theories to pieces and expose them in the assembly. I like to kick their heads with my left foot. In the presence of the elders, I shall prove them enemies of the law and see that they are imprisoned."

Parikshit, the prince, entered and said : "My intrusion may be pardoned. I could follow the trend of your conversation. I submit that such disorder cannot be set right by discussions, criticism and punishment. We have to inspire the minds of people with a positive sense of duty to perform good deeds. Only through planned work can we overcome such disorder. As long as there is well-planned full-time work in the adminis-

trative channels, we can find the light of the Lord holding sway over the public. Only sunrise can dispel darkness. So also the light of good work will dispel the disorder created by atheists and anarchists. Wherever there is dedicated work you can feel the presence of the Lord there. We have to fill the whole empire with His presence."

Yudhishtira: "Thrice true. The influence of Kali can be restrained only when Parikshit is made the emperor. May it be done at once."

Chapter 10

The magnificent towers, buttresses, fortresses and the gigantic walls of Hastina stood high against the background of the dusky sky, as the painted scenes of a city on an old fading canvas. At a distance of about two Yojanas from Hastina, there is an Agrahara on the banks of the Yamuna. The old Brahmin town is called Vala Hastina. Many an old castle is seen at a distance on either bank of the river. They stand against the sky in a silent spell of despair, since many of them are deserted and uninhabited. Many of the Brahmin families left off the Vedic way of life and left their abodes in search of some petty jobs in Hastina. The change took place just after the Mahabharata War.

The Brahmins were foolish enough to abdicate their ordained duties and take to slavery in the name of employment. Power politics and glamour of money made them sell themselves and their bellies to the rich. The deterioration started even in the previous generation. Once Brahmins were honoured and favoured by the kings and had much property and many belongings. As they began to leave off their daily rites of the Vedas they had nothing to do except to eat rich foods and sit down in the evenings on the porticos which overlooked the flowing waters of the Yamuna. There they sat all day long talking ill of their neighbours. Some of their castles were built so far into the river that they had to enter by the back door, taking flights of steps to a height of about sixty feet.

Having nothing useful to do, they gazed at the ripples of the river in the dark and awaited sleep night after night.

In course of time in most of the families brothers quarrelled over their inheritance among themselves and disfigured the houses with ugly partitions. The neighbours of adjacent houses had no words to exchange. Sons often went to the Court of Law against fathers and erected their own houses separately. There they used to spend time in stupid vanity. Year after year many of the Brahmins sold their properties to meet the expenses of litigation and soon grew insolvent. Some of them had to sell away even their houses. Foreigners who came as fishermen had grown rich and purchased those houses. So they lived amidst the Brahmin families and they used to insult them in many ways. It is but natural that the Brahmins became the blacksheep amidst others and are not valued, when they left off their Vedic wisdom. Some of the Brahmin youths had grown impetuous and stupidly adamant in disgracing their own traditions. Having no proper guidance, they made friends with the fishermen and took to drink and beef-eating. As the generation passed, they became poor and went abegging for jobs.

Now the big mansions stand uninhabited and are being looked after by the families of the faithful servants. Even today, the servants keep the buildings in good shape and they themselves reside in separate cottages. They are regular in lighting the lamps in the mansions every night. The big mansions with the limited number of lights stand stretched in the darkness like many ghosts with arms spread. The dim lights reflected in the dark waves of the Yamuna speak to each other in silent murmur.

A batch of a handful of vagabonds gathered in the darkness of a lounge that overlooked the river. It was about one hour after sunset and whispering continued late into the night. It was a congregation of a few Yavana, Barbara and Dasa youths with their elderly leaders. Their main occupation was to go about the city of Hastina and create troubles among the public wherever possible. They were well trained to instigate the foolish citizens to destroy public property.

On the occasion of festivals, fairs and congregations, they have the special knack of creating trouble and intensifying the same to violent fight and bloodshed. In the night, they go about destroying the street lamps, and such items of public conveniences and spoiling the attractive spots of the public gardens. During the day they could get the same results through sheep-like youth of the cities. Their motto is to disturb the sense of security among the public and make them live under constant fear. If the police arrest any of them the remaining members gather in the various centres to concoct slogans that could enrage the public. They could make the citizens believe that the Government was tyrannical. At the same time they could make the police believe that the common citizens were outlaws.

An old man could be heard preaching in the dark : "The Vedic law was contrived as the administrative law of this country. Krishna is the master mind behind it. He implements the Vedic constitution through the Emperor Yudhishtira. Unless we break the administrative structure of the Government, we cannot dream of propagating our slogans, the teachings of our leaders from the Yavana land. Our aim must be to breed discontent among the public against the administration of the present Government. For this, we started our campaign taking the cause of the wage men and those who live by manual labour. Our leaders distribute gold coins smuggled from the land of Yavana among the labourers. We have to visit the labour colonies and the slums of the fishermen. We are to enquire into their problems and encourage them to rebel with some entertainments and money. We are to keep alert about their movements and attitudes. Night festivities are to be conducted to refresh those who toil during daytime. Our leaders have organised centres to train the youth of working classes to be used as various weapons of destruction, fighting, archery and also wrestling. The youth has to be organised to oppose the Government. Everyone should be made to believe with all his heart that Yudhishtira is an enemy of the people, Gam-

bling houses and games centres are being organised in hundreds. We should avoid the displeasure of the Government officials while organising our centres. To this end, our leaders have invented effective measures. Every gambling house bears the portrait of Yudhishtira which is garlanded everyday. The portrait is named as "Our Hero of National Dice." Yudhishtira is known well enough to the public as an expert in dice. This wards off the danger of catching the eye of the police officers.

"Our wrestling schools have the statues of Bhima erected before the red sand circle. At the entrance of every school of archery, there is the statue of Arjuna. Batch after batch, we are training the youth of the hill tribes in these centres. They are being taught that the whole attempt is to infiltrate them into the defence services and some day Yudhishtira is to be overthrown. The youth of the mountain tribes are specially trained in the methods of entering the royal palaces at night and conducting surprise attacks. The trained tribals go into the country and consolidate into various groups under the banner of Ekalavya. It is taught that great injustice had been done to the hill tribes by cutting the right thumb of Ekalavya, etc. To restore justice the hill tribes were induced to agitate. A few among the hill tribes have infiltrated into the armed services. Now they are well-versed in the secrets of the city maps and the secret passages of the royal palaces. They are awaiting orders to take the lead for instantaneous bloodshed. Some of them are dispersed among the forest ranges around Dwaraka. They have infiltrated the Yadu territory and are ready to plunder the villages and attack the rulers at night.

"I am here to alert you about these plans and proceed towards the Yadu territories. I have orders to start this night and traverse the jungle areas around the Govardhana range of hills. I have to meet the Koyas and other native hill tribes of the area. From tomorrow onwards you are to inaugurate the activity among the schools and the colleges. Seventy youths among the hill tribes were sent beforehand. They

came and joined as peons and night-watchers in the high schools of Hastina. Now you know how to conduct their camps. Another batch of youth joined as students in the various Ashrams and they are active in propagating our slogans among the students. They first agitated demanding that the curriculum of schools and colleges should have sciences as first priority and Vedic wisdom is to be removed.

"Some educated tribals joined as forest officers in the Government service. They are supplying timber and other forms of forest wealth to our leaders in the North-West. This makes house-building and extending many facilities to our workers easy in the outskirts of the cities.

"One of the important items of our scheme is to create confusion in the Yadu state and capture Dwaraka overnight. The harem of Krishna consisting of thousands of ladies should be attacked and the ladies are to be transported and appropriated into the hill tribes. I hope you all know the map of the capital of the Yadus. Kusasthali and Dwaraka are the two parts of the same capital city. Kusasthali is on the land towards the East, away from the sea. Dwaraka is a dyke constructed into the western sea. It is almost an island, with its nine gateways opening towards Kusasthali. The gateways are located on a hillock that joins the dyke of Dwaraka to the land of Kusasthali. The hillock is named Govatsa Parvata and the gates thereof are being zealously guarded day and night by veteran patrols. If we can capture the two main gates among the nine, we can cut off food supply to Dwaraka. That will be the beginning of our success.

"The people of this land are too intelligent to have a common understanding. No unity exists in this land of Brahma and it is one of the national traits. Another important factor is that the people of this land trust foreigners more readily than the natives. Inviting an enemy from outside against a ruler of their own clan is another national trait that governed this land through ages. Even now there are some youth among the natives of this land who work against the interests of

their own Government. They are trained by some of our leaders and preachers. They are our effective means.

"Now we have our latest piece of secret information about the vulnerable points of the city. The plateau of Govatsa hillock cut and carved into a bridge as it were with nine gates, is more than a hundred years old. It is reported that the hillock gave way from the bottom and there was erosion caused by the sea. Night and day sea-water flows into the crevice in roaring waves and the crevice is becoming deeper and deeper. Only about ten feet of the stone is still in tact and it is also showing cracks. If the stone wall is completely broken then there is no way of escape for the inhabitants of Dwaraka. If our hill tribe armies are able to take possession of this hillock, then Krishna and his administrative staff become helpless. That means the King, Emperor Yudhishtira will be an old snake without fangs. The future of the land of Brahma will be in the hands of the Yavanas. Now that I leave for Dwaraka to meet you after seven days, I remind you of your programme from tomorrow. Create as much tumult as possible among the commercial centres of Hastina. Plunder the shops and instigate the public to arson and looting. The money from the shops should be immediately sent to our leaders. Citizens should be made prisoners by the police. The police should incur the displeasure of the citizens at every step. I now start for the jungles of Govardhana hill to be there before tomorrow evening. My programme there lasts for five days. I start on the sixth day and meet you in the darkness of the night on the seventh day here itself."

Chapter 11

A chariot of two steeds darted through the streets of Dwaraka. Balarama sitting in the chariot could see through the window the perspective of the red sunset sky swaying with the speed of the chariot. The western sky appeared as covered with road dust. As the chariot darted through the mango groves on either side, a bough fluttered and resumed its position when the leaves seemed to fold their hands in veneration. The chariot was fast approaching the Elephant Square. Suddenly the chariot stopped at the Market Square of Ten Lamps. Balarama opened the chariot door and peeped out. A short-statured Brahmin with a shaven head stood waiting on the footpath. As he approached the chariot, he adjusted his folded upper garment and suddenly set it right from under his right arm above the left shoulder. He was holding a thin staff with a silver handle which he poised with his little finger. He just held the handle of the chariot door and jumped into the chariot with the dexterity of a stag. The door was closed and the chariot resumed its speed. Balarama set his crown right on his head and said: "I hope everything is in order!"

Sudama took out his snuff container and taking out the snuff into the right hand, answered: "Everything is in order, and it is more than our expectation. The old man who started last night from Vala Hastina was despatched to the nether worlds right through the flowing water of dark Yamuna. His followers slept in the darkness of the open varandah, which overlooked the river. They were pushed down into the river quietly by the night patrols of Sahadeva

and it was all managed at midnight. There can be no proof for this, since no one was left by the river waters. The three boat-houses on the sands of Dwaraka beach were set on fire and pushed into the waves. The Yavanas who slept in the boats under the spell of intoxication might have jumped into the dark waves and found their way into the City of Death."

Balarama: "Poor fellows! They must have been drunk more than I can dream of."

Sudama: "May be. But it is not proper for us to joke at your honour! All these things we could clear off easily. But it was a problem for us last night to put an end to the handful of Yavanas who inhabited the Govardhana jungles. They had the support of native hill tribes and we had to kill the eleven foreigners without being noticed by the natives. Our people had their own ways of manipulating things. I hope you remember the many rest-houses there. One of them had been specially built to receive the enemies and honour them.

Balarama: "Yes, I do remember. It is all the creation of our farsighted Satyaki."

Sudama: "Our patrols contacted the foreigners and gained their confidence. They invited the foreigners into the rest-house to have refreshments and rest. There was the bar and the refreshments ready. The doors were closed and the twelve foreigners were hushed in the dark first by gagging and tying them hand and foot. One by one, they were led into the hind room. There is a big man-hole in the room and it runs down the hill to the bottom under which the breakers of the sea roar in darkness and silence. These foreigners were transported through the hole and it was a journey of no return.

Balarama: "We have to appreciate the foresight of Satyaki in building this guest-house. He has the eye of the eagle and the leg of a stag."

Sudama : "It is but a child's play for our people to deal with the Yavanas, irrespective of their number. The whole trouble lies with our internal enemies. Fools among our Yadu youths joined the hill tribes to help these foreigners. I am not able to find a way out."

Balarama : "The same exit may have to be shown to our fellows also. It is the only tenable solution "

The chariot stopped at the Elephant Square. Balarama and Sudama got down and asked the driver to sit in the chariot. They climbed the flight of steps and came upon the platform. They went round enjoying the view of the four corners of Dwaraka. A black stone of a gigantic size stood there chiselled into the form of a beautiful elephant on the platform. By the tiny steps Balarama and Sudama went up the back of the stone elephant and sat down there. The sun was about to set.

Sudama : This is the one thing which I am not able to understand. How is it that our Yadu youths have this anti-national attitude? I wonder how such a thing is possible even under the pious influence of Lord Krishna."

Balarama : "It is a sign of the time. The Kall age begins this year and we now witness its traces in the brains of the Yadus. Our Krishna could secure success to Pandavas in the global war of Mahabharata. He contributed to the age old tenet that 'success embraces the lawful.' He could make Yudhishtira the King-Emperor to lay the law in this land. He gave his flute-music to those who have ears to hear. Through his music he paved the way to emancipation. He made the way to Vedic wisdom clear through his tenets of the Bhagavadgita. Living as a householder, he stands honoured, approached and worshipped by all the Rishis of the Vedic path. Every minute of his life is devoted to the integration of the nation. Every act of his contributed to the synthesis of the human spirit. He has not spent a single day of his life for himself. To save the Yadus from the peril of the dreadful homicide, Jarasandha, our Krishna had to

construct the dyke of Dwaraka. It is the miracle of the day and he protected all the families of the clan, with all the comforts amidst the seven walls and nine gates of the city.

"No one has ever created such immense wealth and splendour for his fellow-beings as Krishna did in Dwaraka. These Yadus enjoyed the fruits of his superhuman deeds for more than a century and they are still faithless. Even some of those Yadus who worship him as God do so from selfish motives. All those who lived long under his protection still seek selfish goals and individual fame, without any concern for the spirit of unity and synthesis which Krishna aimed at. Unfortunately, you have not come across those beings under the protection of our Krishna that are selfless.

"Oh, good Sudama! Believe me that we spent our childhood among those who never lived for themselves. The cowherds of Vraja lived with us and served us all the time, without even a single thought for themselves. It is really our fortune to have been brought up by such angels of virtue and unselfish love. Pious are they, who think of these cowherds of Vraja. Even at the fag end of their old age, our adapted parents Nandagopa and Yasoda do not expect anything from us except the news of our welfare and prosperity. They do not mind even our separation from them and it makes no difference to their feelings of love. Their love is all-innocent, and knows no formality. The faces of those cowherd boys and virgins still appear before our eyes with their ever-smiling lips and all offering love. The service they have rendered us still awaits the return of our gratitude. All that they expected was the sweet presence of our brother Krishna and that too they were denied, but they never minded it. It appears to me that these souls lived beyond desire and above attachment through centuries and rebirths. Who else, except they, can be the embodiments of the ageless wisdom?

"Sometimes there were occasions when the Rishis expected something for themselves. There was no occasion when these cowherds had any expectation. The five sons of Pandu and

their queen Drowpadi stand before us among those who desire something noble, but desire not anything mean. The sons of the blind king did not know what to desire. They desired malice and they perished. The blind king, in his possessive attitude, desired the death of all his hundred sons in his greed and he could not foresee it. Herein lies the blindness of this king Dhritarashtra. Others like Sisupala, Jarasandha, Kamsa and Dabhaka desired Krishna's enmity. Krishna could fulfil the desires of all. All these diverse personalities had their own policies and their own ways of doing things. These strange Yadu creatures belong to a different stock. They had neither the capacity to desire nor the capacity to renounce. Frail creatures, how can these children of passions understand the unbounded, motiveless love of Krishna?

"Even the Rishis of the highest order cannot fathom his love which knows no instinct of possessiveness. I myself feel confused about the why and how of Krishna's affection. But for the fact that Krishna takes pity over these shameless youths, I would have given them a taste of my plough share. Krishna allows time to the seeds of their past deeds to germinate into the incidents that bear fruit. Krishna never forgets that the behaviour of an individual, however odd it may appear, is only a predestined legitimization of his seed-nature. So he tolerates and stands as the very representation of time that brings back to everyone, fruits of his own action. In fact, Krishna is fully entitled to express all the feelings I have expressed now. But the miracle of all miracles is that Krishna has neither opinions nor expressions about others' behaviour. Even today, I see no thoughts about these fellows in him. He walks on earth as the Divine agent of his own smile that radiates life, hope and virtue. Not a sigh of dejection is found in him regarding these people. Not even a shade of doubt passes over his countenance about the future of this land. Life is a child's play to him and it is so even at this age. I cannot even understand what I can do for him. We can plan to help him only if he plans to have something done for

him. The fact is that he exists. His existence includes nothing for him."

Sudama: "The very manner in which he had moulded my life bears a direct evidence of what you say."

Balarama: "Look, what is it? Flames break out in the sea!"

Sudama: "Yes, three in number. Those are the three boats inhabited by the Yavanas. They are ablaze suddenly. These Yavanas go about our city during the day. Today our patrols had twelve foreign visitors confined and exiled to the lighthouse tower. Their boats are being burnt along with the cargo, I think. Today Dwaraka is cleared of all the foreign spies. From tomorrow we have to search for new guests. The problem about the native rebels still stands unsolved."

Balarama: "Another immediate problem demands our attention. Any moment the water of the sea might find its way into the Govardhan plateau! Every second the ocean roars into the crevice and threatens the city."

Sudama: "Our Lord Krishna is the architect of this city of Dwaraka. He is the one who can suggest the remedy."

Balarama: "This morning I discussed the matter with him. He smiled and kept silent. The time for the annual festival gatherings in the Prabhasa is approaching. This erosion should be mended before the pilgrims gather. All the Yadu chiefs will be busy with the festival arrangements and no one takes note of it."

Chapter 12

A holy peepal tree stands unique before the entrance of the caves of Sravasti. Rays of sun seem to cringe through the curves and twists of the valley to make a direct approach of that particular tree. The first set of sun-beams at day-break escape through the apertures of the valley and spray a glitter of molten gold upon its foliage, as if through the holes of a fine hosepipe. No other tree in the vicinity receives the first rays of sun. The Lord of the Dawn makes his appearance on the chariot of his one rotating wheel, showering smiles from his beaming face of golden moustaches upon this age old tree, with a special preference as it were. Day after day, he has imparted to it time as its span and it had accumulated age through the layers of centuries.

The tree is sixteen hundred years old and it has established roots that found their way into the crevices of many a granite stone of the cliff. The sounds of the Vedic hymns uttered by Parasara along with his disciples down the years filled the tree and now seem to stand as its secondary thickenings. Parasara's father, Sakti, imparted lessons of the Vedic wisdom about the Red Ray to his disciples under this tree. He had made Parasara a master of the Vedas and handed down through him the Eternal Brahmanvidya, in the form of Nature's book.

After accomplishing his lot, Sakti had kindled the Yogic fire and burnt his body to ashes in flames. Within a few seconds there was a whirlwind which had blown across the valley like the sound of many conches. Clouds gathered along with the wind and there was a torrential downpour of hill

showers. There was a shower of hails as big as stones. The ashes of the sage were dissolved in rain water and absorbed by this age old tree. Since then the voice of the sage was heard before dawn by those disciples who went into meditation daily under the tree. His habitual Vedic chantings are being heard in the Pasyanti and Madhyama states of "Vak" by those who can hear it. The subtle body of the sage is perceived by the disciples of Maru, in their pre-dawn meditations, coming down the tree to bless them and vanish again into the tree.

Sometime ago, Parasara fed upon the leaves of the tree and water when he observed the austerity of worshipping Hayagreeva. He could see the Lord of Wisdom in the form of a collection of records and biographies, which he called Purana. He saw the Vedic wisdom in the form of Man, the Prototype. The solar wisdom came down to him as a blessing in the form of the Lord's eyes. This expanded into that branch of wisdom which is called Astrology and Astronomy. His father made him well-versed in conducting the ritual of "The Path of the Cows." With that Parasara conducted the cows across the time of the dawn and he succeeded in detecting the dawn of the Equinoxial day with a precision up to the smallest unit of time. Such units of time, divided and worshipped by him, whispered mystic sounds in his ears and appeared before him as the many Mantrams that depict the full picture of the Lord of the Year. The Zodiacal God revealed the divisions of his time scales as the correspondences on his own body. Aries as head, Taurus as face, Gemini as shoulders, Cancer as chest, the Lion as the stomach, Virgo as the loins, Libra as the navel and below and finally the Scorpio as genitals.

This gave him the story of man from birth to death along the path of the year. He could see life beyond death in the remaining four signs—Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. He saw their correspondences along the interior of the bore of his spinal cord. He could also see the colours that express themselves as the colour-sense of Man, the Observer and the keyboard of sounds which correspond with

them. Parasara could see all this in its detail in his own body while in meditation. Then he uttered forth the same wisdom in the form of Mantrams which the disciples recorded and reproduced. Of all, Vedavyasa alone could receive the total picture as it is. He could again get it germinated into the sounds that represented the wisdom. He found that the series of Mantrams revealed through him were the self-same Riks of the ancient Rishis. After verification Vedavyasa transmitted the Riks to his disciples. The time-key of the biographies of the prototype man is called Purana Samhita, the collection of Puranas by Vyasa and he imparted it to sage Suta. This served as the flesh and blood of the Vedic wisdom. All the time-keys which applied to the centuries, years, months, etc., were given to Jaimini as astrological wisdom. Vyasa estimated the ages of the personality of time and understood the behaviour of the beings of creation during the various ages and stages of evolution. He applied this to man and called it the Science of Time in the historical and the pre-historical periods. As an application of this to this contemporary Time-God, he composed the scripture, *Mahabharata*.

The beams of the morning sun awakened the tree with its inhabitants. Thousands of birds left their nests and came out fluttering their wings. They chirped in sounds along the three tones and seven sub-tones of the Vedic gamut. At the speeds of the various measures of time, the birds floated in air and exposed their bodies to the golden glow of the morning sun. One bird, golden in colour, sat upon the tree. It had two glittering blue stripes along the margin of the two wings. Its eyes sparkled like two blue diamonds. Its looks glittered like the rays of the morning sun reflected upon the blue of the sea-waves. It moved its wings and dropped its excreta upon the shoulder of an initiate who sat in meditation under the tree after his morning bath. The disciple noticed it, but was not angry. Instead, he cast his compassionate looks upon the bird. Then the bird spoke in human tongue, "My boy, I am the sage Parasara. This I did

only to test your forbearance and compassion. You have come out successful. The previous night was the longest of this year, today being the sacred Sankramana day of Capricorn. Sage Dirghatamas rules the world since he presides over the present day. This divine sage has possessed sage Agastya and wants to express himself through him. Now Agastya lives in the Nilagiris. You go and see him today and seek the astrological wisdom from him. He will clear off your doubts in the science and make you comprehend the whole of the subject. He will fill the missing links in your knowledge and bless you."

Saying so, the golden bird floated in air and vanished.

Now the disciple stood before the entrance of the cave of Sravasti. It was not possible for him to walk to Nilagiris and reach there the same day. He has mastered the eight Yogic Siddhis, but he does not know how to reach Nilagiris physically. As he was pondering over the matter, he saw a sturdy young man with a radiant smile coming out of the caves. The visitor approached him greeting, "O, Mahatma! Are you the sage Jaimini?"

"Yes, I am."

"Salutations. My Guru Devapi told me that you are here. He ordered me to take you to Nilagiris."

"How is it possible for us to reach Nilagiris today itself?"

"Yes, we can. First we have to climb up this row of mountains."

"May I know your name?"

"I am known as Djwhalkhul. We have to set out immediately. I am very familiar with all the trees of this valley and the bypaths. This tree in flower and fruit is sacred to me, since I received my awakening into a knowledge of my past lives here. When I was sleeping here one day my Guru Devapi gave me the awakening and initiated me into the awakening Mantram of Sreerama, which occurs in the great scripture *Ramayana*. Since then, I could see my past lives. All

through these births my Gurus called me Djwhalkhul. In this birth my relatives know me as Girisarma. My mother is the daughter of Sudama.

They advanced beyond the tree talking and they approached a big crevice near the footpath and took a turn towards the rugged rocks that were shaped somewhat like footsteps. After covering some distance, they had to use the roots of big trees as steps to proceed further. As some places they had to hold on to the hanging roots of banyan trees and take a leap by swing. The valley below was unfathomable. What an ant is to a man, man is to that valley below. The ant can crawl without a slip. Nature has given the ant many tiny legs to grip. Man has only two legs. They are not subtle too. All the subtle legs of man cling to his brain in the shape of many opinions and impressions. Man knows not the right use of these legs and hence he walks along the path of life with many slips and falls.

While they are engaged in talk, they crossed one mountain and began to tread the way to another. Independent of each other, the stones stood piled up, awfully rugged. Filled with such piles all over, the whole mountain presented an aerial view of a big ant-hill. It appeared like the head of a family of different hills. Clusters of shrubs with bunches of wild flowers fluttered in the breeze and looked like the many young ladies of the hill tribes, who gather to fetch water from the many streams that flowed down below. The space that filled the valley appeared like a big container. One is reminded of the proverbial "sky in the pot" described by the logician-cosmologist. The enormous volume of space filled the elevations and depressions of the valley and culminated into the absolute sky unbound that shone above the mountains. It is as if a fragment of space, enclosed in a form, entered the ocean of space. The whole perspective shows how negligible the position of man is in the whole creation. Ants keep continuously engaged in moving the grains of sand to pile them up into ant-hills of various magnitudes. So also man is ever busy in building up civilisations with the populated

cities as grains of sand. Serpents use the ant-hills prepared by their labour. Bigger units of time crawl over the holes of centuries that are fabricated as civilizations by man. Man cannot comprehend the slow movement of the Serpent of Time with its scales as centuries. Man is ever busy with his immediate needs which slyly lead him to death. The flow of the Ganga in the form of many downpours dispersing into various streams suggests many such secrets underlying the mystery of time. Space comes down as the spaces of the valleys on earth in waves. Each wave of the ocean of space comes down as Manvantaras and Yugas that move imperceptibly through man. Each such wave strikes the shores of creation and voices its import. The breaker of the ocean of time liberates centuries, decades, years, months, seasons, noons, nights, days, hours, minutes, seconds and their subdivisions periodically, which again recede into the same ocean of timelessness.

In their conversations Djwhalkhul discussed the astrological wisdom of the seasons, months and half-months. He was happy for the immense wisdom Jaimini had. At the same time he understood that Jaimini paid greater attention to the measures of time than to their import and significance. Jaimini could perceive that the signs of the Zodiac formed in pairs of opposites, casting their influence upon one another. He could measure the lunar mansions also as pairs 180 degrees apart. He could understand how these Nakshatras glance each other. He cared not for the significance of these pairs in fulfilling their mission in creation. Jaimini could understand the whole creation as the expression of the Universal Karma. He is yet to see that discharging one's own duties makes Karma flow as droplets of wisdom through the stream of individual consciousness. Jaimini is trying his best to co-relate Jnana and Karma. He is yet to understand that the two are the wings of the same Bird of Eternal Wisdom, Suparna.

As they proceeded talking, they suddenly saw a very high cliff standing unique. It stood like a bell of bronze

well polished. Its head was decorated with a snow cap of the volume of many cubic Yojanas. Myriads of flames red and white appeared to emerge from the cliff and dart down directly towards them. The rays of the noon sun blazed with unbearable glitter. Their bodies grew hot and the blood seemed to boil within. Jaimini could not bear the sight and suddenly closed his eyes with his hands. Immediately he lost his sense of location. With closed eyes he said : " Now it is already noon. When can we reach Nilagiris ? " .

Djwhalkhul laughed. Jaimini's feet slipped off the path of ice and he glided into the boundless space of the unfathomable valleys. He gave out a big cry and did not know where to he was falling. He grew giddy and felt that his body rolled in space like a top. Djwhalkhul caught hold of his hand and Jaimini found himself standing, but he stood nowhere ! His feet floated in air and Djwhalkhul asked him to open his eyes. As Jaimini did so he found that they were slowly floating in air. Far below towards a little north, he could see rows and rows of the Himalayan ranges.

Djwhalkhul : " Now we are travelling by the sky towards the south. Look just below your feet. The three big mountain streams appear like three floods of light. Beyond, it is the birthplace of Ganga. It is from this spot that Ganga descends to earth by three paths. This cluster of mountains is described as Lord Shiva's crown of hair. See how volumes and volumes of the river water gathers and leaps down the dizzy heights. It ever stands as a challenge of nature to man. The river invokes mankind to use as much water as it can. This sacred place is named Gangotri. Its sounds seem to proclaim that the immense volume of water which flows into the ocean proves the incapacity of man to use the resources of nature. Many times man stands on the banks of the flowing river of consciousness and allows it to flow on proving that he is wasting his life. The flow starts as the first stir from the head of the Lord. It flows through the millions of human beings and emerges out of

their heads in the shape of the many concepts. It is a continuous flow. One who does not know the use of the content, is carried away into the ocean and it is his death.

"Now we are going a little south-west. Towards our left hand, the north-east, you see the territories of Panchala, Nepala and the land of Brahma. At present there is not much to see there and hence we turn to the south-west. That big sheet of blue ripples is the expanse of the western sea. That projection into the sea is the province of Sowrashttra. Next to it, you see Ghurjara. See how we dive down into the stratosphere and through it into the atmosphere. A beautiful dyke shines like a big shark glittering amidst the ocean waves in the noon sun. It is the dyke of Dwaraka. It is the Divine fish for the Kali age to salvage the Eternal Wisdom. The notes of the Vedic wisdom inspire the whole of Bharat proceeding from this place as the many beautiful notes of flute music. Krishna is the Lord of the hosts, who has renovated the Vedic wisdom as the One Fish during this Kali age. Do you see the city of seven walls and nine gates? It is Dwaraka which stands as a big tortoise on the back of the shark. For more than a century this tortoise stood here and served as the cradle of many civilised beings. Since it stood fast for a long time, there are some worms gathered under the belly of this city. They are the inhabitants of the Yadu clan, fluttering enmeshed within the many networks of their own intelligence. They are constantly at logger-heads with each other. These worms are fated to crawl into destruction as this tortoise recedes into the ocean.

Now, we are going up again and taking a turn towards the east. Observe the groups of mountains on that side. Those two mountains are Gomanta and Raivataka. Here we are crossing the boundaries of the Kurus. Towards the left you see a cluster of red hills and a red city of many towers and fortresses. It looks like a cup filled with blood-stained meal. It is the city of Magadha. Here Jarasandha killed many princes and spilt their blood in the name of Man-sacrifice. Hence the city is blood-stained. Towards the east,

there are the rows of mountains and they are the Vindhya. The sixth hill is the residing place of the Mother Goddess. The Daughter of the Mount favours this place and lives here with her name, Vindhyavasini. Through generations she stood as a refuge and a shelter to all the mountain tribes. She has grown dumb as these hilltribes got polluted by the culture of the foreigners. She no more heals them of the smallpox and cholera in times of need. This is because they lost their belief and began to resort to the drugs that are being supplied by the Yavanas.

"We again take a turn to the south-west. This plateau of land was a thick jungle during the previous millennium. Our Lord walked across this range when he came down as Srirama. Then this area was called Dandaka. These thickset groups of trees demonstrate the area called Janasthana. This is the place where Srirama killed Khara, Dushana and the other fourteen thousand demons for the welfare of mankind. By the grace of the Lord, these places stand a bit cultivated and civilised. Towards the left we see the boundaries of Vanga province. Below, we see Keekata and at a distance it is the eastern sea. This land along the eastern shore is Utkala and Kalinga. The inhabitants are well-educated but like the Yadus they have no unity. They consider any foreigner more reliable than a native of their country. The Vedic wisdom is gradually fading here. People imitate the fashion and the language of the Yavanas.

"Now we directly dart to the south. The area is marked by three sacred hills. Hence it is called the land of Trinaga. A river flows down from the western shore to the eastern shore like a decorated border. It is the sacred river Godavari. First it started as a lake formed by the dribble of a few droplets from the cliff. Sage Gautama made it his abode to conduct penance. Then the pool disappeared into the mountain. It reappeared down the foot of the hill amidst the forest of Kusa plants. Gautama could block the flow of the water into a full tank with the power of his penance and called the tank Kusastarana. Still some water escaped and hid

itself in the rocks. It ran as an undercurrent which appeared and disappeared at six places. At the seventh the flow finally appeared and it is the river Godavari. It flows over the sacred rocks of Bhadrakiri where Srirama resided with Sita and Lakshmana. We pass on to south and we can see the swift flow of a reddish blue river, Krishnaveni. It takes a turn near that mountain, which is called Indrakila. Many royal sages had accumulated gold in the caves of this mountain and invoked the presence of the Mother Goddess as the Guardian Angel of the Treasures. The Daughter of the Mount stands there as Kanakadurga, the Fortress of Treasures. The inhabitants of this land are known for their grit. There is nothing that they cannot achieve if at all they care to do so. They know no fear of death. Chanura, the state champion of wrestling in the court of Kamsa, who was killed by Lord Krishna, comes from this land.

Now we pass on to the sacred river Pinakini. That means we are going to enter the territories of the Pandyas. The inhabitants are worldly-wise. They know how to live happily and make others happy. A sage named Dramila had established a seat of learning here to propagate Vedic wisdom. His followers have been called Dramilas through ages. The Yavanas changed it as Dravida and tried to segregate the people of the southern provinces away from the rest. It is a political attempt to split the whole country into two. For this they wanted to prove that the Dravidas belonged altogether to a different race from those who followed the Vedic path. Those who supported this theory stood as enemies to Vedic wisdom through centuries. But for those few, all others follow the Vedic code and support it. The Brahmins in this area stood as Brahmins through generations. They kept up the southern recension of the Veda through a process of continuous recitals. Lo! to the left, we see the range of mountains that are named Sabaromattapura range. They are the famous Nilagiri hills. Have you noticed the fragrance of the various bushes of Nilagiris that is being wafted

on the gracious wings of the southern breeze? Remember that each tree or plant or shrub or herb of this range of hills carries a characteristic fragrance of its own. The third of these mountains is called the Durga mountain. Sage Agastya resides in its caves. We are nearing the hermitage of sage Agastya. Still it is one-and-half hours before the sun sets."

There is a footpath of a beaten rugged flight of steps directly down the cliff of the hill, through the valley to the very bottom. A banian tree near that footpath is a familiar landmark of Djwhalkhul. Both of them alighted near the banian tree. As their feet touched the moist ground, there was a thrill of chill that passed through their bodies. The hair on their bodies stood up, while a little cloud followed them down from the skies. The cloud screwed up the southern breezes into little whirlwinds, and sprinkled little showers upon them like the spray of rose water. After a shower of three minutes, the cloud flew away into the skies like a blue bird. They walked down the footpath. As gentle breezes after the shower greeted every tree and plant, the two guests were honoured by many a showered perfume. They approached the thick vegetation in the vicinity of Agastya's hermitage,

A steady hill stream ran down with gurgling sounds along the dark, thickly covered sides of the hill. As they walked during the day, it was quite dark and they heard the many sounds of the crickets and insects constantly. Two celibates clad in sack cloth and tiger skin appeared before them and received them cordially. Their faces were brilliant with the horizontal ash marks and they greeted Djwhalkhul with a smile. Djwhalkhul introduced Jaimini to them and approached a small flight of steps that were overgrown with green moss. As they both climbed the steps and approached a right turn, they saw a short stout sage with a thickset beard and reddish locks of hair rolled up into a crest. He was about five feet tall and wore a lower garment of sack cloth. His eyes were round and prominent. The face commanded respect and the expression indexed the depths of his soul. When Djwhalkhul introduced him as the great sage Agastya, Jaimini

prostrated to him repeating the sacred names of his spiritual heirarchy.

Agastya : May you live long. I rejoice to see you, the disciple of Vedavyasa. I feel flattered as if by the presence of your Guru. We have been friends ever since the childhood of our souls. Births and rebirths passed after we became friends. First we met at Varanasi when I was a resident of that place. I was presiding over my centre of learning, when Vyasa visited that place with his disciples. Lord Visweswara tested him by making even a morsel of food or a little water hard to obtain for him and his disciples. Seven days passed and on the seventh day Vyasa grew furlous. He wanted to curse the sacred city of Varanasi. Then the Mother Goddess appeared before him in the form of the Goddess of Food. She gave sumptuous food to him and his disciples. After the lunch the Lord grew furious and banished Vedavyasa from the city. It was the occasion when I too was a bit angry with the Lord Himself! Vyasa felt sorry and walked to the south along the banks of the Godavari with the band of his disciples. He built his hermitage at the sacred pilgrimage centre, Daksharama, which exists on the Godavari delta. He made the inhabitants of the Trilinga land adepts in the Vedic texts.

"After sometime I was forced to cross the Vindhya along with the path of the star Canopus and to settle in the south. Then I visited Daksharama and lived there for some years with Vedavyasa. Had not the Lord grown furious and banished Vyasa out of Varanasi, there would not be the exuberance of the Vedic wisdom amidst the inhabitants of the Trilinga land. After some time Vyasa left his body there and was reborn in the north once again. Afterwards he reached Krishnadwipa and made a number of Rishis out of the northern inhabitants. I came down still south and made my Ashram here in the Durga Mountains. Thirty-two births passed after I came here and my present one is

the thirty-third sheath. In this birth I could enjoy the immensity of the flute music of the Lord. In its light, I stand here as one of the Masters of Vedic wisdom leading a happy life. But this is the time when the Kali age is making its beginning. Its forebodings now and then frighten me even. Those who are influenced by Kali in this region argue that they belong to the Dravida race, which is altogether different from the Aryan race. But in fact the term Aryan is as mythically concocted a race as the Dravida.

"The Yavanas argue that the northern inhabitants of the Bharat are intruders, who came from foreign lands and had driven away the Dravidas to south. This fictitious theory caused the inhabitants of Tenkana, Konkana, Kerala and Pandya regions hate the Vedic culture. At that time I composed the first grammar of the dialect of the Dramilas and gathered disciples, batch after batch on the pretext of teaching them the language to regularise it. I also invited eighteen families from the disciples of Parasurama and made them settle in the south-west. They had specialised in some important branches of Vedic wisdom. Their descendants got multiplied and now they occupy the whole land of Konkana where they are known as Saraswatas. I made them specialise in some rare branches of astrology which include the Nadi system of preparing the records of human lives. I guided them in preparing the real chronologies of the ancient rulers against the false theories of the Yavanas and made them popular. It is a system of astrology which traces the rebirths of human beings in groups.

"I also prepared the records of the previous births of all the Rishis along with those of their associates and family members. The lives of great Masters like Maru, Devapi, Sanatkumara, Maitreya, Djwhalkhul and the Manu are all recorded on palm leaves. Along with them, I got the rebirths of many of the ordinary inhabitants of the area recorded and through them, I could attract the attention of the sage Kerala and his followers. Then I made Kerala's disciples

pastmasters in reading these records and bequeathed those records to them. I know that you have received a good deal of the ancient astrological lore from Vedavyasa. Now, I want to supplement your knowledge with the southern branch of the science. This is the reason why I wanted you to be here.

"The Yavanas pretend that the astrology of this land is inherited from them. They venture to put forth the suggestion that the Vedic astrological wisdom is also derived from their science. The fact is that the astrology of the Yavanas is full of superstitions that have no scientific basis. For example, Arishtatati, one Yavana astrologer, decides that the new moon day is evil in its influence. Our people blindly copied it and they cling to the superstition. According to the Vedic tradition the new moon day is important in marking a nodal point of time in the biological scale of this earth. Consequently it is a holy day. Further the Vedas say that the moonbeams, controlled by the new moons and full moons conduct the Pitrus down to the earth and enable them to work out fertilisation and decide the times of fertility and fecundation. From new moon to new moon it is a cycle of the reproductory gods to work out the sacrificial periods of the eggs in the genital mechanism of woman. The sacrificial ritual thus organised by the Pitrus works out the embryonic development.

"The rituals of this astrological branch of Vedic wisdom enable the human beings to ensure good progeny. The related Mantrams carry much import, but fools use them only at the annual memorial observances conducted in honour of the departed elders. Hence their mock ritual includes only a play of the sacred grass and black sesame. The idea of the holy reproductory ritual escaped their eyes. The result is that mating came to be misunderstood only as a beastly act of emotions and not known for the sacred ritual it is. It should be celebrated for begetting better children."

Jaimini: "We hear now-a-days that the Zodiac with its twelve signs and its application in astrology was inherited from the Yavanas by our people. How far is this true?"

Agastya : " As far as the present day understanding of the twelve signs is concerned, it is true that our people have copied it from the Yavanas. But unfortunately, it is of not much use in real astrology. The present knowledge of the Zodiac gives but little about the spiritual abilities of a person. It affords some flashes of insight for predicting the events of mundane life of the children of emotions and instincts. It does not help us to know the birth of a sage or the light of the Lord coming down in a human form. It is the fixed stars that give us guidance in such matters. The seven stars of the Great Bear, the stars of Prajapatis like Pulastya and Pulaha, give us the readings of such events of the ages. The Vedic astrological lore abounds in the wisdom of the stars. The Puranic allegories speak of the mode of their interpretations. The movements of the fixed stars and the relative movement of our sun decide the cycles of the Yugas and Manvantaras. These cycles hold the keys for the descent of the Manus, the Rishis and the coming down of the Lord. The time keys and the interpretations that correspond to the evolutionary progress of the races of man can be known only through this branch of astrology.

" Apart from this, there is one ancient branch of science that deals with the constellations of the Zodiac. It is somewhat different from the Yavana interpretation of the twelve signs. The constellations of Aries, Taurus, etc., are interpreted quite in a different way in the collections of the Puranic allegories. For example, Aries holds the time key for the allegory of the destruction of Daksha's sacrifice and the symbolic cutting off of the throat of Daksha. Of all the constellations Vrishabha, the Taurus, explains the nature of the sacred Bull, Nandi, the vehicle of the Lord. Mithuna, the constellation of the twin stars, Castor and Pollux, speaks of Ardhanariswara, the Divine Androgyne, the concept of Oneness and duality between power and consciousness.

These stories apply not only to the part of the body and the psychological traits of their subjects but they also reveal the chronologies of the solar and lunar dynasties coming down

to earth to lay the law and administer the Lord's will upon the evolutionary phases of the beings through their cycles of births. They also hold the nodal points of the Rishis coming down and the Lord's descent. They are read as the landmarks of the progress of humanity and the place of the individual in the universe. In olden days, the Yavanas have blindly copied the wheel of twelve signs without the Puranic keys and began to use it for predictive purposes. The wisdom of the sign Mesha enabled the Rishis to foresee the coming down of the Lord as Sreerama in Tretayuga. As a kind of preparation, they made Dasaradha perform the sacrifice.

"The knowledge of the star Brahma made the Rishis understand the birth of Srikrishna and the coming down of some holy beings as cows to this earth. They could understand the existence of the seventh plane Vaikuntha and the light of Narayana coming down as Krishna to earth. Narada, who was well-versed in this wisdom, co-operated with Krishna in all his endeavours. This branch of astrology has the lunations, the lunar mansions and the path of the Equinoxes over the stars as its data. The keys of its interpretation can be known by the collection of the Puranic stories given by Vedavyasa.

"Here is an example of my prediction according to these calculation. On the seventh day from today, Angaraka will be in conjunction with Yama to form an occultation with the star Robini. On that day, we will witness the scenes of clouds raining showers of blood in Hastina. On the same day, the water in the western ocean near Dwaraka will rise as a cloud in the shape of a fish tail. Then there will be a storm of hailstones of incredible size. The snails and shells of the sea also rise up and come down with showers. These are signs to forebode some disaster.

Krishna is the Lord who knows everything. Yet he plays the role of a human being in putting forth every effort to save the Yadavas from destruction. Alcohol will be prohibited in Dwaraka and the prohibition will be defied. One of the seven stars of the Great Bear, Vasistha by name, is now in centurylong occultation with the constellation

of Makha. The result of this is that the Yadavas grow impetuous, get deeply drunk and destroy each other. All this comes to pass as the result of the prophecy of Rishis. Some Rishis go to Dwaraka and get insulted for their prophecies. They curse the Yadus and thus it comes to pass. All these things can be known to some extent but no one knows how the Lord behaves. Neither we, nor the Devas can know what he chooses to do. He has to express himself out. The influence of the constellation of Makha at present has produced a new species of goats in Hastina that howl like foxes."

Djwhalkhul: "It is so. We also find a variety of parrots in the Himalayas producing the cry of owls. In Panchala a cow gave birth to a donkey. Some youths made an exhibition of it in the city and earned fabulous amounts of money. Mongooses produce a new species of rats that destroy the corn in the fields and that can bite away metallic containers into pieces. In the Matsya province, a hound gave birth to a cat-like beast of a frightening size. It began to leap in the streets like a cheeta. The police had to struggle a lot to catch it into a cage and crush it to death with iron bars."

Jaimini: "Such abnormalities speak of something horribly undesirable. So say the Puranic texts."

Agastya: "The sun was in the constellation of Regulus during the previous new moon day. There was a small earthquake and it resulted in creating a crevice in the mountain of Dwaraka and the sea began to advance into the crevice. All these things prove only the validity of science, the result of observation and systematised statistics outlined by intuitive perception. Any day they may not carry truth and any day they may go wrong. This is because the will of the Lord is the highest and can dominate everything. If the Lord wills, he can control the breakers and push the sea back. He did so in the past, when he came down as Sreerama. We do not pretend to predict what he can accomplish. All that we can do is to meditate on him in our hearts and follow his will. Those who do so will be saved from the evils of Kali."

Chapter 13

On the outskirts of Hastina there was a beautiful meadow about a square of krosa in extent. The tender lawn is kept beautifully crisp by mowing. The diagonals of the square plot are beautifully marked by four clean pathways. Their meeting place subtends a magnificent, old seven-storied palace. The palace was erected by Dhritarashtra, the blind king, when Yudhishtira was running his seventy-seventh year. Dhritarashtra was the then king, whose eldest son Duryodhana felt jealous of Yudhishtira's Mayasabha and wanted for himself a bigger palace. The play of dice between Yudhishtira and Sakuni took place here. The attempt of the Kurus to insult Panchali by stripping her naked, took place here. The consequent fury of Bhima with all his challenges to kill the Kurus took place here. In those days the blind king occupied his royal throne and styled himself the king of the whole land of Bharat from this palace. Then it was called "Kurugarbha." After the destruction of the enemies in the Mahabharata War, Yudhishtira became the emperor. He turned this palace into a congregation hall. Since then it is called Rajavidyalaya. After anointing Yudhishtira as emperor, Lord Krishna purified the hall with the Vedic chantings of the Brahmins and made his ceremonious entry into the building with all the elite of the congregation. He invited all the great sages of the royal and the Brahmin families. Krishna worshipped all of them, touched their feet in veneration, and made Yudhishtira touch their feet to see that any evil influence might be dispelled. He made Panchali wash the feet of all the sages and sprinkle the holy

water over the heads of all. Then the Rishis declared that Yudhishtira was in no way guilty of becoming the cause of the Great War. They blessed him with the Vedic hymns of the glorification of the Cosmic Person. After this event, the Lord made Yudhishtira perform three grand horse sacrifices as signs of his sovereignty and splendour. The congregation of the sages at the end of these three sacrifices was held in the same hall. All the sages of the land of Bharat attended the congregation.

Since the coronation of Yudhishtira, this building came to be used as a resting palace for the scholars and those who came to see the emperor. It is also used as a place for feeding the poor, the destitute and the infirm. The servants who keep the building clean and the meadow green and the pathways fragrant with the regular sprinkle of sandal-wood water and those who look to the upkeep of the whole place exceeded thousand in number. They resided on the premises and their duty was to look after the visitors.

Everyday Panchali came there with Nakula and Sahadeva to supervise the building and the supplies of foodstuffs and material. The ground floor was provided with well-arranged seats for ten thousand people. The premises was bustling from the morning, with many thousands of charlots in the pathways. Royal personages and great sages from the royal families and the Brahmin families were being received into the building. It was the seven-day congregation of all the wise people of the land. The flavour of costly dishes radiated down the first floor. Janaka, the ruler of Mithila, was coming down the steps from the second floor. Many of the royal sages were following him in veneration. Sahadeva was leading them down the steps to the hail in the ground floor. Viswamitra, Kanva, Praskanva, Madhucchanda and other Brahmin sages were coming down from the third floor, led by Nakula. Vyasa, Suta, Saunaka and their disciples came down from the fourth floor led by Arjuna. Bhima and Panchali stood near the parapet of the fifth floor. They stood well-dressed to receive anyone. They were looking at the

activity in the compound below from the parapet wall. Narada and Lord Krishna descended down from the sixth floor and met them. Krishna greeted Bhima and Panchali with a graceful smile.

Bhima : "Salutations, my Lord ! Our sage Narada has asked us to keep the fifth floor vacant to receive some distinguished guests but we find none such here."

Narada : "Why, they are coming soon, my boy ! I came downstairs to indicate their arrival.

One stalwart of golden complexion entered by the door. He was clad in white linen, which was like the scaly skin of the cobra. As he entered, he offered salutations to Narada and Lord Krishna. The folds of his eyebrows met at the centre of his brow assuming the shape of a beautiful lotus bud. Krishna greeted him and said : "O, my friend Maitreya ! What is the news?"

Maitreya : "You know it all !"

Krishna : "Even what is known requires repetition for recollection. It is for that purpose that Yudhishtira organised this Satrayaga. The ritualistic Mantras of the holy fire-place came to a lull and it seems it is time for the inauguration of the Seminar. We have to reach the ground floor.

Then entered Maru, Devapi and Djwhalkhul by the doorway. They travelled invisible through space and directly reached the fifth floor where they made themselves visible. Panchali lead them downstairs, sprinkling flowers and sacred corn flakes in their way. They all came downstairs, Krishna leading. The distinguished visitors from all floors assembled in the big hall of the ground floor, in two sections. All the Rishis began to chant Purushasukta sonorously in one tone, while Lord Krishna walked along the middle of the path and occupied the throne on the dais. Narada and Maitreya also came to the dais, Yudhishtira invited Vedavyasa to join them, Yudhishtira himself sat at the feet of the Lord. The congregation started with a recital of Saraswatisuktas

and Suparnasukta. Then, Viswamitra stood up and made a ritualistic chanting of the Mantras from the Adharva text, which was traditionally employed to destroy the diabolical forces. Then he said :

“These Mantras, when offered, will destroy all the demonical forces. Indra killed the demon Vritra with the help of these Mantras. When our Bhima was fighting Jatasura in the forest, your royal priest Dhaumya recited the same Mantras. The value of these Mantras in our land cannot be overstressed. They are the only weapons which can destroy the present negative forces instigated by the Kali. If this great sage Narada gives his consent we will make all arrangements to teach the invocation of these Mantras in all the learning centres in Brahmavarta. Then the features of Kali will be totally devastated.”

Narada : “This whole creation is presided over by certain laws which cannot be transgressed. One of the laws of creation is that it is not possible under any circumstances to control evil by violence. Our great Maitreya once wanted to wipe out all the devils and disembodied beings from this earth. To that effect he had conducted an all-destroying fire-sacrifice. It was before he approached Parasara and became his disciple. He tried and tried and found it impossible. On the advice of Parasara he desisted from it. Previously you had an occasion to use all these Mantras against Vasishtha. Using spiritual powers for destruction is restricted to the defence of the State. Beyond the duties of the ruler to protect the interests of the State, no one can find a proper place for these destructive weapons. The evils of Kali can be overcome only by adhering to our duties more steadfastly. The tidings of the time are more powerful than anything. No one can swim against the tide. Everything culminates in time and time devours the activities of all the beings. Every one can find a better way in meditating on the Lord as time and glorifying His name. Negative tidings alternate with positive ones, but our duty is to do what is expected of us. Ultimate justice stands above all and everything. It is not

a balanced way to believe that difficulties can be surmounted and happiness achieved by using the spiritual force through meditation, penance and willpower."

Thus spake Narada and resumed his seat. Sahadeva stood up with salutations and spoke: "I pay my respects to the congregation and the noble ones who gathered here. May I be permitted to say something. It is about the emergence of certain new trends in the spiritual path. New relationships are being established between Gurus and disciples. It is taught that these Gurus ward off all evils and impart all success to those who embrace their path and take them as their Gurus. I wish this congregation decides the validity of such paths."

As he resumed his seat, a celibate from the south stood up and said: "My respects to the house. I wish to say a few words. Certain personalities prevail in the south who proclaim that they are the legitimate descendants of the Lord himself. They style themselves as divine incarnations and establish their own Ashrams. They teach that the Guru is the only god, if at all there is a god. A disciple of this path need not read the scriptures, need not recite Vedas and it is not at all imperative that he takes his daily bath and offers his prayers or worship to the god or gods. If one closes his eyes and surrenders to the Guru, he will experience the highest and he will get all the favours, mundane and divine. Success in all pursuits is promised. Devotees are taught not to go to temples or to worship the images of the Lord's incarnations. Some of them argue that idolatry is sheer ignorance. Yet, they instigate their disciples to worship their idols and pictures. Many such Gurus are in vogue and the innocent people are at a loss to understand whose picture they have to worship. Some of the common folk may lose belief in the traditional path, when they are confused by the competition of these many Gurus. Then they cannot choose either of the paths. In some of these Ashrams the disciples object to the good-intentioned pilgrims worshipping their traditional forms of God. They prevent them from perform-

ing their daily worship. The picture of one Guru cannot be taken to the hermitage of another. One Guru claims that he showers a downpour of spiritual power upon the heads of the devotees and it is said that the power can be felt flowing down the spine. They assure that one can feel the result within a very short time by getting oneself initiated. His disciples stand at the gate of the hermitage and force the pictures of the Guru upon the pilgrims and the passers-by. They bring the pictures into the house of real, good-natured devotees and force them to keep them in their shrines. They paste the pictures of their Guru to the walls and the doors of other devotees. Some of them vehemently remove the pictures of Sreerama and other incarnations. Another Guru argues that the ancient Gods like Sreerama died long long ago and hence they cannot help those who worship them. Since he is a living Guru, he assures that he is a living God who can save his devotees. His devotees put forth the same argument against others. I then asked them: "Respected Sirs! What are you going to do after your Guru leaves his physical sheath? Are you going to embrace another Guru who is living?" They get furious and accused me of being an atheist. Growing angry in such situations means accepting defeat. The disciples of another Guru assure that their Guru teaches everything in silence. It was said that he was going to break his silence when the Kali age is crushed to an untimely end. But before the advent of Kali, their Guru left his physical sheath, long before he left his silence. Luckily enough we are trained by our elders into the one traditional Vedic path and hence no distraction is possible with us. But what is the fate of those innocent souls who vascillate and stand in doubt? We can stand these aberrations. But we are not in a position to save others. We are really afraid of the situation and we submit the issue before the elders of this congregation. We take refuge in you and follow your injunctions. We feel that it is not enough if we follow the law. Law is not only to be followed but also to be protected. We feel that the elders of this congregation can save the situation."

Vedavyasa : "All these distortions have cropped up because we, the elders, have refrained from enlightening the common masses. For a long time the scholars were content to indulge themselves in pious aristocracy and discussing things among their inner circle. Now I will clear off your doubts. There is no spiritual wisdom without a spiritual hierarchy of Gurus and disciples. Guru should be the god of meditation to the disciple, but at the same time it should be remembered by all the Gurus that no Guru is God himself, the Absolute. All the created beings on earth are the forms of God, descended into their own natures. Everyone is to be liberated from his own nature and then he is God himself. To lift one up from one's nature and to liberate one is the pious mission of the Guru. To this end the Guru is to be worshipped as God. Akrura has established his own school of thought that no human being can be understood as God or worshipped as God. In spite of his own theory, he is worshipped by his disciples as God and his very purpose is defeated. The truth is that we all worship Lord Srikrishna as our God. He, in his turn, worships his parents and elders and bows down to them in veneration. It is the path which we are expected to keep to and discriminate from the other paths."

A middle aged celibate from Gandhara stood up. He refused to salute the congregation and argued : "For the matter of that, your Krishna is also a human being. You are all worshipping him. Why should any one take an objection, if we demand our disciples to worship us?"

Saunaka : "Neither Krishna nor any noble soul ever demanded any worship from others. We worship Lord Krishna of our own accord due to our veneration. Even then we worship the law-establishing light of Lord Krishna, but not his human body. Fitness for worship depends upon one's concern for human welfare, the welfare of all beings and the superhuman deeds one does therefor. We witnessed this splendour in Lord Krishna. Remember that our Lord showers upon us the same veneration and devotion which we offer him. Do you know why he showers his veneration upon us? It is

because our lives are dedicated to the welfare of the creation and the law that governs the welfare. Any one who is really devoted to society will automatically be venerated. God manifests through those whose life is offered as a sacrifice. The moment one feels egoistic of God's presence within him, then the spark disappears and what is left behind is only a physical sheath of the five elements and some combinations of the qualities of nature. We see and enjoy this play of the Lord and we seek him in every one. It is for this reason that the Lord is worshipped by us."

Nakula: "Again the question remains: How to save the common man from the clutches of these new self-styled Gurus?"

Bhima stood up, bowed down and said: "There is only one way and it is bloodshed."

There was untimely redness in the sky. The climate suddenly changed and it was red on all sides. Clouds gathered and it became dark. Arjuna left the hall for a few seconds and returned in a hurry. His white upper garment was suddenly blood-stained before he entered the hall again. He bowed down and said: "My Lord, the Emperor! Clouds are pouring down showers of blood. It is really ominous and awful."

The assemblage was disturbed all over. Every one was dragged out into the porticos by irresistible curiosity and fear. Blood was raining in showers. The scene was as if squadrons of armies have been massacred and smashed in the distant skies above. Suddenly, there also fell a shower of hailstones of various sizes hurled down from the sky like many lumps of flesh and muscle. The hailstones increased in size and there was a sudden short shower of the size of big mountain rocks. The chariots in the open were destroyed to a large extent and many of the horses died. The servant folk suddenly rushed to take shelter under the porticos and in the meanwhile some of them were badly injured. The rain stopped and there was a lull. It was followed by

brilliant sun which showered three or four lightnings and thunderbolts at a close distance. Within a few minutes these awful scenes occurred and disappeared. The audience resumed their seats. There was a discussion about these unnatural phenomena during the seminar. Astrologers declared that it was the indication of the advent of the Kali age. Vedic scholars opined that there was a transgression of the Vedic law all over the land and hence the Devas of the etherial arch had showered their wrath. Astronomers maintained that it was the result of the occultation of some planets over the longitudes and latitudes of the fixed stars. After a while, an old lady celibate with long hair rolled around her head stood up. She paid her respects to the assembly and said:

"The traditional Vedic scholars living on the banks of the Godavari have declared that ladies are prohibited from learning the Vedas and conducting the rituals. They are debarring ladies from getting initiated into Brahnavidya. I submit that there is neither evidence in the scriptures for this, nor is there a tenable logic behind it. The stories of the Rishis prove that there were Brahnavadinis who got themselves initiated in the ancient days. Moreover, the deity, of many Vedic Mantras happens to be a female. We hear that the Mountain God Himavan, who presides over the Himalayan range, got his daughter initiated and anointed as the High Priestess of the female heirarchy. The composers of the Vedic hymns included ladies in the past. Some scholars interpret that Lord Krishna is also one of those who excluded ladies from Brahnavidya. We appeal to this house for clarification and we take the opinion of the assembly as our standard."

Kanva stood up and said: "We support the view of this lady in this matter. Sex is no bar to Vedic wisdom, nor are women exempt from being anointed. We take this decision and make a resolution of it in our assembly, before which we request Lord Krishna to express his views,"

- Krishna stood up and said: "The decision of the Rishis implies our acceptance. In my teachings to Arjuna, I said that even ladies and the Sudras and the Vaisyas can attain the highest spiritual wisdom. Then, why doubt about the Brahmanas and the ruler class, I said. The remark applies to my doctrine of Bhaktiyoga and it has nothing to do with the question of permitting ladies or not, to gain entrance to spiritual probation. In no way does my statement exclude ladies. What I mean is that it is not wrong if ladies do not get initiated, because they get salvation even through discharging their own duties. For Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, and especially the males, the initiation is compulsory and for others, it need not be enforced. The scholars of this house need not condone those who interpret my statements against my intentions."

Ladies and gents from the various parts of the land attended the congregation. All the aspects of the spiritual tradition were discussed threadbare. Whenever ten thousand people were fed, there was a blow of the conch. Night and day the conch was blowing throughout the seven days. In every street, people discussed the sacred law and the discourses of the assembly. The quintessence of the scholarly expositions was recapitulated in every shop and house of the city. Even the servants discussed the injunctions and postulates of Dharma in their houses. On the seventh day, there was the strange discourse of an astrologer from the south. He said:

"The calculations of the present day astrologers are all faulty and erroneous. You all believe that it is the beginning of the Kali age according to your calculations. With my calculations, I do assert that much of the Kali age is already over. One day, when I was in deep meditation, I saw the Lord as the Kalki Avatar, the Lord on the white horse. He said to me "My boy, Kali is coming to an end. This is why we find so much lawlessness and disorder everywhere. You have to compute the Kali years in the divine scale and not according to the mortal years. This means, that you have to consider a day equivalent to a year. Such a computation

shows that the Kali age is coming to an end. I took birth in the village of Sambala and my father's name is Vishnu-yasa. It will not be long before I cut off the throats of the sinners and establish the kingdom of the lawful. I ordain that you propagate this doctrine of mine. In the future you are going to be my Priest-Minister and you are going to help me in the administration of justice. These are the words uttered by the Lord and I go round the country to propagate the doctrine. I came here to this assembly only to disseminate the message. Listen to me and worship the Kalki Avatar and save yourselves from being counted as sinners. Those who do not believe will be among the sinners and stand in great danger.

Sahadeva's face flushed in anger and he gnashed his teeth as he listened to these words. Saunaka was about to stand up to put forth some argument, when Lord Krishna smiled and stopped them. The Lord stood up and invited the astrologer to the platform. He honoured him with silks, ghawls and a pair of sacred shoes, a staff with silver handle and betel leaves with nuts, camphor and saffron. The astrologer felt flattered. He could not contain his joy. He fell prostrate at the feet of Lord Krishna and said: "I now see the self same Lord of mine. I see the Kalki Avatar in this great Lord. All of us glorify him and attain salvation. Let us repeat the name of the Lord." Saying so he folded his hands again and again in veneration and receded to his seat.

Towards the close of the ritual assembly, Yudhishtira made Krishna honour all those who attended. With the consent of all, he stood upon the dais and worshipped Krishna as the Lord of the ritual. He offered Arghya, Padya and the full pot to the Lord and fell prostrate at his feet. Panchall and other ladies waved lighted camphor around the Lord. All hailed and invoked the welfare of all. Thus the ritual came to a splendidous culmination,

Chapter 14

After the ritual congregation was over, Viswamitra and Kanva approached Krishna along with Narada. They had a private discussion regarding the curriculum of Vedic education to be adopted after the advent of Kali. Once again there was a discussion about the need of the destructive Adharvana Mantras for the protection of the law. Viswamitra and Kanva once again overstressed the need of including black magic in the curriculum. Krishna smiled and silenced the debate by keeping his counsel. Viswamitra's face flushed with anger as he said : "The Light of Wisdom cannot stand without taking protective measures through violent means. Destruction of enemies becomes inevitable in the course of protection. Such a thing is not new to you. You have steered the Mahabharata War, as a destructive measure to protect the law. You are the best judge, since you stand as a living example of the measures under discussion."

Krishna : "Let there be no element of emotional displeasure in the matter, since you, the elders, are involved. I wish that things are taken in a direct perspective. I was at no stage the steering cause of the destruction in the war. It is true that I was an all-round witness to the whole scene. When I came as the arbitrator representing the Pandavas, I used my ninety years' experience to instil peace among the Kurus in the assembly. All of you were present as witnesses that day. Had I an inclination to use destructive measures, I would have exhibited them in the royal assembly itself, when the sons of the blind king transgressed their limits. I would

have affected the murder of a hundred Sisupalas and the assassination of a thousand Jarasandhas. No doubt there were jealous and malignant fools in that assembly. But at the same time I remembered the fact that all those who were present were not merely fools. There were Bhishma and other noble souls, whom I respect and venerate personally. This has to be kept in mind when we consider the case of our educational institutions. Any day the race of mankind as a unit of creation is bound to be an admixture of the desirables and undesirables. If I had wanted to put an end to those in the Royal Assembly on that day, it would have been imperative for me to kill all the good people, along with the wicked ones there. The outbreak of the war was not to my liking and hence I stand beyond guilt, even though the destruction was unimaginable. Of course, I employed my strategy in the war but it was not motivated. I stand before you now in the same attitude. I strongly believe that the law cannot be protected and established by destructive means."

As Krishna finished his speech one messenger named Bhadra told him that the chariot was ready for Krishna to start for Dwaraka. Krishna stood up and walked down the steps to the ground floor. Viswamitra followed him as he said: "Your silence puzzles me. Still I have something to discuss with you at leisure. In the assembly you have announced that the decisions of the Rishis were automatically yours. Then we feel that you stand obliged, to accept our suggestions regarding the curriculum."

Krishna smiled and walked straight to his chariot in silence. He made his salutations to all the Rishis who stood in two rows. His golden chariot shone bright as the banner of Garuda danced in the wind. As Krishna stood up in the chariot, all the Brahmins chanted Mantras of farewell. Beginning with Yudhishtira, every one touched his lotus feet and made his salutations. Viswamitra and Kanva stood aloof. The sturdy steeds of the chariot made a move and the chariot went out of sight in no time. Then Viswamitra said to Kanva:

"See how Krishna went away, while we were still talking ! It is not proper for such a noble soul to insult us, the Rishis, who treat him as the Lord of the Sacrifice. However much gracefully I tried to swallow the insult, I still find fault with the attitude and behaviour of Krishna. I wish to see the end of it. Within seven days from today, we have to go to Dwaraka along with Narada and summon an assembly to discuss and decide the matter.

Kanva and Viswamitra approached Narada and requested him to follow them to Dwaraka. Then Narada said : "It seems that the Lord has not given his consent to your trip to Dwaraka. What are you going to do if you do not get his presence there?"

Kanva : "We can afford to wait until his presence is given. In any case, we have to make a trip to Dwaraka."

Narada : "I have the least objection to follow you to Dwaraka."

All the three made a trip to Dwaraka by foot. Outside the city of Dwaraka there was an Ashram at Kusasthali which was intended to serve as a guest-house to the Rishis. The three were received there. It was learnt that Krishna was out of station. The Lord went out to attend the sacrifice conducted by Akrura in his district and was expected to return in seven days. Viswamitra persisted that they should stay at Dwaraka for seven or more days, until Krishna came. Kanva gave his acceptance. Narada was not at all willing to stay on. For two days they stayed there and enjoyed the hospitality of the inhabitants. Narada was going out in the mornings and returning to the residence by nights. On the third day morning Samba, Gada and Sarana came to see the Rishis to pay their respects along with some other youth. The instigation of the Yavana preacher that Rishis had no powers, was uppermost in their minds. They had an idea to put the powers of these Rishis to test. They made their salutations to three Rishis and had their first sitting of discussions.

Samba : "The inhabitants of Dwaraka believe that the Rishis possess powers to bless and curse. Can we know sir, how these powers are inherited?"

Viswamitra : "By virtue of penance one begets powers. Celibacy creates an upward path for the light of the seminal fluid of man. The light extends gradually to the Chakras one by one. It gains in incandescence through three stages, called Ojas, Sahas and Bala. The fourth stage is called Bhrajas or brilliance. This is achieved when the light reaches the throat centre or more correctly, the speech centre. Then it finds its expression in the shape of speech. When the law is to be inculcated the power of speech manifests as blessing, when it is used to smash lawlessness, then it takes the shape of a curse."

Narada : "Blessing and curse shape themselves automatically and escape our lips according to the fitness of the person at hand. This is the truth of it. A curse or blessing works as a Mantra to stimulate the results of the past Karma of the subject."

Gada : "Some years ago, it so happened that the sage Durvasa came to our Lord Krishna and got angry with him for no reason. He had cursed our father that he would meet his end with an injury to his toe. But it never happened. How is it?"

Narada : "Once it so happened that all the sons of the blind king were destroyed in the war. Their mother, Gandhari, in her uncontrollable sorrow had cursed our Lord that the Yadavas shall fight among themselves in future and destroy one another before the eyes of our Lord. She indicated a time-limit of thirty-six years for the destruction of the Yadavas to take place. Now the thirty-sixth year is running and hence we cannot conclude in haste that the curse of Gandhari is not fulfilled. It is not true that it is not fulfilled, but it is true that it is not yet fulfilled. Same is the case with the curse of Durvasa, which follows."

Sarana, "Some of the Yavana Gurus can predict the future of persons with the help of astrology and palmistry. Is it possible for the Rishis to predict so?"

Kanva: "Prediction is a cheap performance which needs neither astrology nor palmistry. One can predict the future by seeing the face. It may be a great science in the eyes of the Yavanas. Such performances are considered boorish among us."

After that day's sitting, the three youths took leave and went home. They wanted to test the predictive powers of the Rishis. The next morning, they approached their friend, the make-up man of their amateur theatre and disguised Samba as a beautiful young lady. Samba being an efficient actor of the stage, could mimic the walk, talk and the looks of a beautiful lady, besides the dexterity of the make-up man. They took Samba and approached the Rishis. Gada introduced Samba, when he said: "This is a virtuous, chaste woman, who comes from a respectable family of the Yadus. By looking at her face, can you predict, sir, if she begets a male or a female?"

Viswamitra gazed at Samba from head to foot. He could easily understand that it was Samba. He got furious to notice the attempt to fool the Rishis. With uncontrollable rage, Viswamitra stood up like a rising cobra and said, "This beautiful young lady is Samba, the son of Krishna. Are you not ashamed of the meanness of your behaviour? Now this is the result. By the power of my word, this Samba will conceive truly. Tomorrow he will give birth to a club-shaped weapon of iron, which in its turn, will be the cause of the total destruction of the Yadus. Then there will be no one left even to verify the validity of my curse!"

Saying so, Viswamitra set out to leave Dwaraka. Kanva stopped him and persuaded him that they should see Krishna.

Narada: "For this vile behaviour of yours, it is not possible for you to have the presence of the Lord. The Lord himself is capable of cutting your throats off with his

divine wheel, if at all he wants to take action. No one can escape the wrath of the Lord even if he can cross the seven oceans and enter the bottomless pit of the nether worlds to hide himself. But the grace of the Lord is that he prefers not to be angry with the Rishis. You stood on the earth that belonged to Him and behaved so nastily and inhumanly ! The pages of time will record that you, the Rishis, could not get out of the meshes of desire and hatred, after long periods of penance through births and rebirths. Do you remember, Viswamitra, that your penance is not natural to you ? It is inspired by a motive of competition against Vasishtha and the result of such penance is always like this. The fame of your seerhood of the Gayatri Mantra stands blemished ever and for ever, with the present act of yours. I see the implements of time in you, the puppets in the hands of desire and hatred. With souls so deeply stirred by emotion, do you still hope to protect the Vedic wisdom of this land ? The best of the alternatives is to hide your face in sack cloth for shame for what you have done and go from Dwaraka before the Lord's return."

Samba showed signs of pregnancy that day itself. That night, he experienced abdominal pains like those of pregnancy. The next day itself he gave birth to an iron club. The youths got frightened and began to believe in the curse of the Rishis. In great horror they gathered all the elders of Dwaraka and informed them of what had happened. They then placed the iron club before the elders. Balarama had returned just then from the Prabhasa island. He came to know of everything that had happened and he sent people to search for the Rishis. They had already left the place. Balarama thought about it for a long time and got the club filed into fine powder which they threw into the backwaters of Dwaraka. After it was filed, a sharp dagger-sized piece was all that was left of it. Satyaki had it fixed in a handle and kept it with him safe,

Chapter 15

A circular enclosure of two square krosas was decorated adjoining the sea as the congregational centre of Akrura's seven days' sacrifice offered to Lord Vishnu on a magnificent scale. Seven rectangular fire-places held continuous flames of sacred fire fed with the ghee of cows. Varuna Mantras addressing Lord Vishnu chanted by hundreds of voices were being heard from a long distance windward, like the roar of the sea. The altars, ladles, platforms and the sacrificial cups, were all marked with the signs of the wheel, the conch and the vertical brow mark. At the centre of the circus, he had erected the emblems of the conch and the wheel to a height of hundred feet and the place was like the very gates of the city of Lord Vishnu. The inhabitants of the surrounding villages could see the top of the emblems. On the first three days, Akrura made the fire offering with the various sacred herbs of perfume mixed with the ghee of the cows. The smoke of the fire-places reached the very vault of heaven. In one fire place, they offered rice, in another sesame, in the third the lotus buds, in the fourth chips of sandal-wood, in the fifth lumps of camphor, in the sixth the sticks of holy palasa tree and in the seventh, they offered the fuel of the aswatha tree, all mixed with ghee. During the first three days, some of the priests made the milk offerings, on the fourth day they made the offering of curds, on the fifth day the offering of honey, on the sixth day the offering of fruit juice and on the seventh day they offered pure water for appeasement of the Lord.

On the first day there was a hitch. Those with the vertical brow marks follow the path of Vishnu; Those with

the horizontal brow marks of sacred ash worship *Slva*. It was ordered that these two sections were not to dine together. *Vedavyasa*, who occupied the seat of the pastmaster of the ceremonies, came to know of this. He ruled out the objection from the second day onwards, when all dined together. The procedure of the whole ritual was laid down by *Akrura*, while *Krishna* and *Vyasa* followed it to the letter.

Akrura proclaimed at the commencement of the sacrifice that there would be rain before the end of the sacrifice of seven days. His disciples talked highly of *Akrura*. Some said that *Akrura* had the sign of the diamond in his foot and wherever he treads, there will be rain. Some others added that similar sign existed in the right foot of *Rishyasringa* in olden days. Even until the noon of the seventh day, as ill-luck would have it, there was no sign of a drizzle. No line of cloud traversed the expanse of sky. Sunshine ahead of summer was ablaze and hot winds lashed up the drifting sands of the beach. *Akrura* who was confident all through these days, showed signs of embarrassment by the noon of the seventh day. Sickly pallour characterized his expression. The sacrifice was completed with all splendour and it was time to offer gifts of wealth to a divine elder.

It was the occasion when some great personage was to be invited upon the dais and honoured in the name of the Lord. *Akrura* stood silent looking at the sky. His disciples zealously invited him to the dais to honour him but it was not in accordance with the custom. It was deemed sheer audacity that the one who performed the sacrifice was to be honoured! *Vyasa* took the lead and explained calmly: "*Akrura*! You are the one who performed this sacrifice. As a rule you are to honour and not to receive honours. The situation requires that you should invite a great personage with all devotion and worship him in the name of the Lord. I stand here not only as the Pastmaster of the Ceremonies. You are my old friend and a classmate of childhood days. So to say, I have the personal duty to wish you well, apart from doing my duty as a priest. Believe me, this Lord *Srikrishna* walks on earth

as the living Lord among us. His Omnipresence works as the Sacrificer, the Receiver, the Food and the one who eats the sacred food of the sacrifice. So said Bhishma, the lofty soul, when he tried to define what Krishna is. All the Rishis accepted what he said. For the simple fact that our Lord is born among you as one of the Yadavas and walks amidst you all, you are kept in illusion which is ego-centred. You know the Vedas, Vedangas, the various branches of law, the code of conduct and all the commentaries of the scriptures. Yet all your learning is veiled by ignorance which beclouds your mind as pride. You have to worship Krishna as the Lord if the veil of ego is to be rent. Tear the veil asunder by touching the lotus feet of the Lord and taking refuge in him. This is the only way for you to reap the fruits of this grand sacrifice. This sacrifice, though grand in its style and range, is but the result motivated and you have to make atonement for your ego. Listen to me. Stand up and take the full pot to offer it to the Lord in the form of Krishna."

Without a single word, Akrura held the offering pot in his hands and invited Krishna to the dais. As he offered the pot, he was overpowered by an ineffable ecstasy. As he offered priceless garments, tears of joy stood in his eyes. As he applied sandal paste to Krishna's body his hair stood on end. As he applied red Sindoor mark on the brow of Krishna, his voice quivered. With some effort he spoke: "My Lord, Lord of the worlds! Your manifestation is the framework of all the Vedas. Your deeds form the very import of the Vedic Mantras. The way in which you lay the law speaks of the heart of Narayana. Shower your grace upon me by breaking the shell of my ego and save me. But for this, I find no other desire in me. Merge my personality in your light.

As Akrura uttered these words, the Lord stood smiling and showed his hand in the gesture of Abhaya. A great mysterious light unfolded behind the Lord. Lo! The conch

and the wheel appeared; the lotus and the club appeared, all held in his four hands. A crown he had of burnished gold, studded with many a glittering gem. Decked he was in many garlands of unearthly glory. Planets beamed, stars twinkled and galaxies floated through his gaze as the Lord winked. The head of a lion with the many little flames as its hair tossed in a loud roar. As the lion opened its mouth with inturned fangs glittering flames broke out from the hollow of its mouth and flared up the skies. Hundreds of Yadava heroes appeared fighting among themselves and were getting swallowed up by the flames. The multitude stood terror-stricken and without a stir, still as statues. A spell of silence passed as a wave over all. Akrura was found touching the lotus feet of the Lord and sanctifying his head with the dust of the foot. The grand vision disappeared into their minds and a gentle breeze caressed every one. The whistles of the breeze could be heard amidst the total silence. Clouds gathered from all directions as if invited. The whole atmosphere grew dark within seconds and every one was thrilled by the nipping wind. Big droplets of rain began to come down and touch the earth with spiriting sounds. There was drizzle which soon grew into a shower and then a torrent. All the Rishis exclaimed "Glory to the Lord! Glory to the Lord!" After a while rain stopped and the weather became clear. Akrura made the Lord distribute wealth and gold to all the priests of the sacrifice. Towards the culmination Vyasa placed the Sindoor brow mark upon the forehead of the Lord and said:

"It was an incident in the past. The Lord drew Vidura out of the service of the blind king and had shown him the path by sending him to the abode of the sages. Now this is another incident of the Lord showering his grace upon Akrura. The Lord of the Cosmic Frame did not forget the two beings, Vidura and Akrura. This is the spirit of the Lord who graciously visited Bhishma to open the gates of salvation for him. The culmination of this sacrifice is beyond all imagination and is the good fortune of all those who have

attended it. Only two Rishis Kanva and Viswamitra have not the luck of witnessing it."

Krishna : "They are busy kindling the fire for another sacrifice in Dwaraka. It is Man Sacrifice, in its true sense. Akrura ! The situation needs my immediate presence at Dwaraka. See that my chariot is kept ready.

Krishna's chariot with its banner of Garuda came drawn by sturdy steeds and stood in the meadow. All the dignitaries of the gathering arranged themselves in two rows and loudly hailed with one voice "Glory to the Lord !" Krishna climbed into the chariot proceeded between the two rows of dignitaries.

Chapter 16

When the Lord reached Dwaraka, it was nearing sunset. A depressing silence sat over the whole city. Everyone who walked the streets, slipped past the others with passing, silent salutations. Though the splendour of the city was as before, it appeared bereft of its original brilliance. The change could be clearly seen on vacant faces of its inhabitants. The chariot of the Lord stopped near a huge gate at the famous "Bharani Triangle" where three roads met. Balarama, Satyaki, Kritavarma, Gada, Samba and Sarana along with others stood there in a row awaiting his arrival. The eight wives of the Lord's harem, along with other ladies, stood in another row, offering the light of flaming camphor to the Lord. The chariot stopped between the two rows. Sudama proceeded to the fore of the chariot between the rows and spoke with salutations.

"Gracious hero of the nine gates! an un-precedented offence took place in our city. Dumb with fear, these people stand silent, since they have no guts to inform you of it. Narada, Kanva and Viswamitra came to our place six days ago. Headed by Samba, our youth of the city insulted the Rishis with their boyish pranks. Viswamitra grew angry and cursed them, with the result that Samba gave birth to a club-shaped metal weapon. It was doomed by Viswamitra that this club would bring about the destruction of all the Yadavas. So, Balarama got the club powdered and scattered in the mure of the backwaters of the sea. The Yadavas and all those who take refuge in you stand helpless, I pray you, rescue them and save them."

As the Lord stood in the chariot, his eyes were red with fury. His face shone like the noon sun of summer. He said: "Those who take refuge in me never stand helpless. But the rest of the Yadavas belong to another category. They are only my contemporaries and not my devotees."

With his conch and the wheel Sudarsana, the Lord got down and stood on the ground. He blew the conch and its call reverberated over the whole city. The wheel, the weapon of the Lord, revolved around the tip of his index finger, producing whirls of light and spokes of lightning. Suddenly the conch and the wheel escaped his hands and flew off into the sky. They shot higher and higher until they disappeared into the immense void as all witnessed the miracle. The chariot broke into flames and was soon burnt to ashes. In the light of the flames, all could perceive a divine chariot ascending up the heavens and vanishing into the yonder worlds. As the flames died down, there was total darkness all around and the eyes could not see anything. Even though it was past the time of sunset no one had the sense to suggest or request the Lord to enter the city, as everyone stood aghast for a prolonged breath of time. At last Balarama lovingly held the hand of Krishna and gently patted him on his shoulder. He said: "Patience, my brother! It is time that we should return to our place and rest for a while."

Balarama led Krishna by the hand and Krishna walked dazed as he crossed the main gateway. He walked into the palace gazing into the very depths of the darkness of night. Everyone slipped away, when Krishna stood at the main gate of the palace. He said:

'Pardon me' my brother! Order the inhabitants of the city not to touch liquor from tomorrow. Let there be no slackening in our human effort to save the stupid Yadavas from total destruction. These children of the Yadu, Vrishni, Andhaka and Bhoja clans are puppets in the hands of instinct. They are neither wise, nor innocent. Their creation is a strange freak. They function as pawns of desire and hatred,

the two potent weapons of Time, the Leveller. Have you noticed the appearance of the comet during the first part of the night these days?"

Balarama: "Yes, I did. It made its first appearance six days ago. Along with it, sage Viswamitra also made his appearance here!"

Krishna: "The celestial sign is part of a Mystic Alphabet of the Heavens, which is of no recent origin. The scribble of Time in the Space dates back to thirty-six years. We saw it before the beginning of The great War. Then you could avoid being the witness of devastation, since you left the place on pilgrimage. I could not avoid that unhappiness. I had to face the blind king and his wife to console them after the war. The queen Gandhari, to whom the world was ever blindfolded, took my hands into her's and burst out in lamentation for her sons, when she said: "My dear nephew! You have devoured all my hundred sons and you have not left even one dear soul to serve us, the blind old ones. With your very eyes, you have witnessed the total destruction of all our kith and kin and still you stand unmoved! I am a poor creature to whom there is no world except my husband. If it is true that my heart was ever true and faithful to my husband, who is born blind, by Heaven, it must come to pass, thirty six years hence, that all your kinsfolk fight among themselves and that you witness the destruction of all the heroes of your tribe. Then you will be able to understand the present anguish of my heart."

Balarama: "My brother! We will talk of these things tomorrow and then decide our plan. You are tired after a journey. Be refreshed and take rest."

Chapter 17

It was about 2-30 A. M. Silence reigned over the streets of Dwaraka that looked deserted. The intermittent lull and roar of the waves of the sea could be clearly heard like the breath-in-union of all living creatures of the city. The gurgling noise of water streaming down the rocks which were buffeted by the roaring breakers could all be heard clearly. As the ocean continued its ceaseless sway, like the eternal flow of time, huge waves welled up like the immense universe and steadily moved on towards the shore. Patches of white surf spotted the immense expanse of the sea, which like a huge python of time swallowed up the wave universes into itself.

As the tidal waves rose higher and higher the water of the sea was pushing the dark scum of the stagnant backwaters into the midst of the city. A thick, muddy dark layer covered the bank of the backwater all through and gave out a fetid stench. The iron dust filed out of the club-shaped weapon that was begot by Samba was thrown into the backwaters and the whole thing was muddled like black ink. It was as if the angel of time was preparing ink to record the stupid behaviour of the Yadavas and the notoriety of Viswamitra's curse on the Yadavas on the big sheet of sky above the city. Ripples formed playing against all imaginable ghastly patterns, like big glaring eyes, frowning eyebrows, crooked moustaches and fiercely curved fangs. The constellations of Mrigasira, Ardra, Punarvasu, Pushyami and Aslesha shining along the ascending vault of heavens like the many designs painted along the roof seemed reflections of those shapes below the dark sky encompassed within the

expanse of the constellations was like Bhadrakali who stood across the space with extended arms. Aslesha was like a great serpent held in her hands.

Along the streets of the sleeping city some skeletons were moving about, their eyes shining like embers through the holes of their skulls. They steadily approached the servants' quarters. They got over the compound walls and slipped into the backyards of the houses. They uprooted the flower gardens and knocked at the backdoors. The ladies in some houses opened the doors and peeped out. The ghastly sight of the moving skeletons immediately shocked them. In deathly fright they screamed and closed their eyes. Some of the ladies fainted. The skeletons entered the houses wrapped the ladies in black cloth like rolls and carried them off within seconds. As the other members of the houses got up they were confused. Ladies, children and old people ran out in panic. The males pursued the mysterious intruders with weapons and sticks in their hands but the skeletons had already disappeared with the ladies. Crying, weeping and moaning pealed out of the houses. The whole colony woke up on hearing the screams and lamentations. In no time the whole city was on the streets. Groups of ten, twenty and thirty people filled the squares and meeting places. They were hurriedly discussing the frightful incident. Every one thought that the city was occupied by ghosts and devils. They did not know what to do and they were discussing the many alternatives. At last it was day-break. People got composed a little but they were at a loss to understand what to do. All the common folk felt their very hearts plucked out when they heard the news of the haunted city. Even men of the stout hearts felt vacant since they knew not what to do. The afflicted families approached the triangular meeting place at Bharani centre before the palace gates. They roared in sorrow, beating their breasts. Balarama walked down to the gates and witnessed the heart-rending scenes. He gathered information and sent word for Sudama. It was known that Sudama was out of

station. During the first half of the night itself Sudama left by foot for the jungle areas adjoining Govardhana.

After his bath, Krishna sat in meditation in his room upstairs. As the day advanced food was served under the trees to the afflicted. They did not eat or drink and they were mourning. Balarama and the whole of the royal family also kept off from eating and drinking while they waited for the news. After the noon some fighters among the city patrol brought the last ladies in charlots and presented them there. The ladies were very feeble, almost unconscious. Another group of armed fighters followed the batch, pushing some skeletons before them. Those were the skeletons who kidnapped the ladies the previous night. The skeletons were being beaten as they were led and there was blood all over them. Indeed, they were not actually skeletons. They were the inhabitants of the forests who came in the attire of the skeletons to loot the ladies of the city. They were directly led to the underground cellars. After the scene was cleared, Sudama came on foot, presented himself before Balarama and delivered him the news. All the ladies kidnapped were restored home safe by about 4-30 p. m. and Sudama had no bath and nothing to eat and drink since last night. He fought against time and tide and succeeded in restoring the ladies. He took leave of all and went home.

Chapter 18

The Brahmin street in Kusasthali ends at a congregational hall with much space around it. The inhabitants of Kusasthali send their children, before sunrise, to the congregational hall, where they were given instruction in the scriptures. They divide the children into classes and teach them the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmanas and Aranyakas. The invasion of Kala Yavana a few years ago marked the beginning of the anti-national movement in the land of Bharat and Lord Krishna started his campaign of giving his touch through the Music of the Soul, almost at the same time. Uddhava got scholars initiated into the Puranic lore and made them propogate the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in every village. According to his scheme, discourses were conducted on Ramayana, Bhagavadgita and Sanatsujatiya in the congregational hall during the evenings. Not only the inhabitants of Kusasthali, but those from the neighbouring villages like Gopuccha and Gomukha came and attended the discourses with rapt attention and began to grow devotional. Three years earlier, Krishna could neutralise the anti-national scheme of Charvaka through his own scheme of Soul Music and since then, Uddhava introduced his procedure of popularising the scriptures among the common folk. With the help of his disciples, Vedavyasa could complete composing the Puranas in the form of written scriptures. Simultaneously Charvaka tried to gather the palm leaf manuscripts and burn them away before they were popularised. Djwhalkhul took the lead and distributed the manuscripts in the various corners of the land. At the same time, Krishna confined the

scholars who were just then being influenced by Charvaka to the huge mansions, provided every comfort to them and made them copy the manuscripts in large numbers. The copies were distributed among the villages simultaneously. He wanted to popularise among the lay people Vedic thought by reciting the Puranas with good exposition. For this Uddbava erected shrines and installed the image of Sreerama in them. The congregational hall at Kusasthali was one of such type.

One evening a Brahmin named Devarata was explaining the incidents of Ramayana to the people. The temple hall was full and people gathered in the open place also. The policemen were standing around the temple with their well-trimmed moustaches and grim looks. Devarata began his discourse.

"Sreerama came to the South during the years of his exile, accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana. He toured across the Southern Mountains. The sages of the hermitages gathered round him and worshipped him. They explained to him their difficulties at the hands of the carnivorous giants. They explained how the Rakshasas inflicted violence on them. As a rule these giants were mad after a taste of beef. They robbed the sages of their cows and oxen, ate the beef in the nights and threw skeletons before their hermitages by the morning. Some of them attacked during daytime, beat the Rishis and took away their cattle. Some giants defiled the fire-places by butchering the cattle there, taking the meat, getting it fried at the end of sticks in the holy fire itself, to get fresh, hot fried meat. A few of the giants got addicted to human flesh and they killed the Rishis. They used to fry the bodies in the fire-places and feasted themselves thereon."

As Devarata was narrating, one of the policemen laughed in a cruel way and said: "Then what were these Rishis doing? Could they not burn the giants to ashes with their mystic powers? These Brahmins through ages could do nothing except enjoying the grants of rulers and filling their bellies sumptuously with ghee and dhal."

Everyone among the audience was stunned. During the past three years, no one dishonoured the congregational place with impertinent questions. Everyone listened to the discourses with devotion and attention. Such a type of cheap, boorish prattle was never possible within the limits of Kusasthali, which was sanctified by the rule of the Lord. This was something unexpected. People cast looks of surprise and contempt at the questions. It was something unimaginable that such an insult was possible from those belonging to the branch of Law and Order. Devarata ignored the disturbance and tried to continue the discourse. Then the policeman approached him straight and stood before him. He howled: "Sirra! Don't you have any other business except spoiling the minds of the public with the false ideas of these Puranas? You are making them idle."

One among the audience stood up and chided him. "You are the one who is to protect the Law and Order. Whenever there is any disturbance among the public, you are the person to put an end to it. Now you yourself create a scene by talking such nonsense. What is the reason?"

Policeman: "I will tell you the reason. You, the Brahmins are sinners. You have no shame. Through centuries you lived by the charity of the rulers and you took pride in developing nothing but your bellies. Those two fellows Viswamitra and Kanva, visited our place and having filled their bellies with the hospitality of Kusasthali, they cursed the Yadus with destruction. Sometime ago, that ugly Brahmin, Durvasa gulped the Payasa in the house of Krishna and asked the people to smear the remaining portion to all parts of his body. In the end, he cursed Krishna that he would meet his end by receiving an injury to his foot. Some of the Yadavas got vexed with you, the Brahmins, and they have given us secret orders to punish you. We wish to inflict corporal punishment upon you. Enough with your preachings; Stand up and pull the cart of weapons, following us to the destination. Now onwards, we propose to give rest to the horses and make you pull the carts."

Saying so, the policeman began to beat Devarata with the handle of his lance. The other policemen began beating people among the audience. They forced some of the audience to draw the cart to the destination. Kritavarma gave secret orders to a section of the police without the knowledge of Balarama and Krishna. The policemen obeyed the orders and insulted the Brahmins with all sorts of punishments. Food grains granted to the Brahmins in the villages were redirected and distributed among the police. No food-stuffs reached the Brahmin villages. Deprived of their livelihood, the Brahmins became helpless. They were appointed as servants in others' houses and they were given food in the open frontyards. One Brahmin brahmachari was beaten, since there was delay on his part in making arrangements for bath in the house. Another Brahmin was grabbed by his tuft of hair since he did not clean the clothes properly. Such rude behaviour became common. Seats in the schools were reserved for Yadava children and Brahmin children were admitted into the schools only if some seats were vacant. As people served food to Brahmin servants, beef-eating was forced on them. There were lectures arranged in defence of beef-eating. One said :

"The ancient Rishis possessed thousands of cows because they ate the cows and bulls. For milk, such a number of cows was not needed. The Rishis of the ancient days used to eat beef and grow strong and healthy. When it was the case, why should you Brahmins of the day have any objection? It is foolish."

A deputy of Kritavarma arranged an open discussion, with the Brahmins about beef-eating in the village of Gopucchā. On the dais, he explained : "It is stupid to think that eating 'grass seeds' is not a sin and beef-eating is a sin. Each seed of grain produces thousands of seeds. If you eat one seed, it means you have killed all the thousands of potential seeds. If you kill a cow, you are killing only one life and it is no sin."

A Brahmin stood up and answered : " Sir, each cow gives birth to many calves—male and female. If we eat one cow, it amounts to killing all its progeny. It is taught that to be born as a human being is something noble and that it is a great opportunity. If you approach a civilized lady and ask her to stop feeding her child and give her milk to you, she will kick you. But it is not the case with the cow. You are enjoying its milk, at the cost of its child. That means the cow occupies a place more respectful than your mother. Hence the very idea of killing it to eat is ugly and monstrous. It makes man a monster."

For expressing such sentiments, the Brahmin was beaten and imprisoned. This was the change that took place within one month, after Viswamitra's curse. The Brahmins could not stand the situation and they left Kusasthali, with their families. Within one month, the whole Brahmin community evacuated the city. Some of the families took shelter with the emperor Yudhishtira at Hastina. Yudhishtira and his brothers were stunned to notice it. Panchali burst out into sobs and weeping. One morning, she worshipped the enshrine plant Tulasi and went into meditation. She could recollect the scene of Lord Krishna offering her clothes to save her from the insult in the Kuru Assembly. She addressed him and prayed :

" From the beginning, I know you are the Saviour of the helpless ones. You are not in the habit of keeping quiet when women, cows and Brahmins are insulted. The plight of the Brahmins from Dwaraka is heart-rending to me. Daily my routine is marked with feeding ten thousand Brahmins in golden plates, at the time of Yudhishtira's lunch. I have grown old with the pious routine. Is it to witness such ghastly scenes as the Brahmins of Dwaraka report, that I live long? If the Brahmins who know the Vedas are insulted, then the human welfare of this land will crumble down. Welfare is intertwined with Vedic wisdom and its protectors in this land. I pray that my devotion to you and my pious intentions should create favourable conditions for the Brahmins from today."

Parikshit grew despondent of the situation. He went into his room upstairs and stood in meditation before the picture of Lord Krishna.

When Krishna and Balarama were conducting the parliamentary sessions at Dwaraka and when the hall was occupied by Satyaki, Kritavarma, Pradyumna, Anirudha and the ministers along with administrative staff, some Brahmin families entered the assembly hall direct. They were headed by Sudama, who walked into the hall along with all the members of his family. He folded his hands in veneration and addressed Krishna and Balarama:

"You are the two lights who came down to earth with a mission to lighten the burden of the earth. All through your career, you tended the cows and protected the cowherds. This, all the inhabitants of Vraja and Brindavan know. You ruled the world with the Brahmins enjoying honourable positions. You established the Law to the joy of all the Rishis. Human welfare is the mission of your lives. Now the conditions are changed. We do not wish to see more horrible scenes. We prefer to leave the place without witnessing anything worse. We are leaving for the North. We will station our families at habitable places and then we proceed to the Himalayas to cast off our bodies in penance."

Balarama was dumbfounded with the fury of his anger. He stood up and said: "What an awful thing! Brahmins were insulted within the city limits of Dwaraka. This is something unbecomable. Who is the cause of all the sin? I prefer to smash the fellow whoever it may be with the sharp edge of my plough weapon."

Krishna held Balarama by hand and made him sit. Sudama and others took leave of them with salutation. Krishna was silently observing. After they left, Krishna whispered in the ears of Balarama, "My brother! This is not the time to bring back the Brahmins and the cows. It is time for us to lead the Yadavas out. We propose one festivity in the form of a picnic gathering in the seashore forest."

Saying so, Krishna stood up and announced to the audience: "O, the noble descendants of the Yadu, Bhoja, Vrishni and Andhaka clans! On the tenth lunar day of the darker half of the month that ensues, we all propose to have a family wide camp in the seashore forest. It is resolved to have three days of festivity there. On the fourth day from today, all of you get ready with your wives and children. Arrange to make proper transportation of food and other materials to the beach forest, enough for three days. There we will have our holy dip and worship of gods and then we conduct the required rituals. We propose to make our offerings to the Brahmins and eat and enjoy in merriment. I propose that all the families of our clans should go out without any exception."

All felt happy at the announcement of Krishna. Vasudeva, the father of Krishna stood up and said: "My son! There will be no security to the city if all the families leave. Myself, your mother and some other elders will stay back to look after the city. All others can proceed and celebrate the festivity. It is also true that our age permits not to follow you, and take part in the merriment."

Krishna listened to the advice and took the consent of his father by touching his feet in veneration.

Chapter 19

About six krosas north-east of Dwaraka, there was a thick forest. The road for vehicles run across the thick, sky-scraping foliage of the jungle. It was a hilly path in elevation and depression. From a distance, it makes the appearance of a snake creeping along the elevations and depressions. It was a brilliant morning and the sun shine fell upon the roadway through the branches of the trees and the roadway gives a varigated aspect. A chariot in golden glitter was appearing and disappearing along the bushy pathway. Now and then throwing its glittering beams, the chariot appeared like a diamond lamp twinkling. The driver was driving and a young prince stood in the chariot, holding the rod and looking on either side, enjoying the beauty of the forest. He was Parikshit. The chariot entered Kusasthali, when the speed was reduced. Parikshit expected some Brahmin youths from Kusasthali to meet him on the way. They were his classmates and old friends. When the Pandavas exiled for twelve years in the forests, those Brahmin families came under the patronage of Krishna and Balarama. Then they settled as the inhabitants of Kusasthali. Now none of them was found on the way. The houses of Kusasthali on either side of the chariot were found uninhabited, many of them. Some are locked. Some have doors opened and through the doorway, the Tulasi shrine of the backyard could be seen and it was found dried. The houses had a haunted appearance. Some houses were occupied by the police families and some by the fishermen families. Crows were found carrying egg shells and bone pieces. The frontyards of some houses were dirty with heaps of the quills

of birds and the hair of animals. Parikshit stopped the chariot and made the driver enquire. The bypasser gazed at Parikshit and the driver with a look of indifference and suspicion. He said: "All of them left the city. It seems they were not pleased with the Yadava atmosphere. Recently a Brahmin named Viswamitra came here and behaved nastily in cursing the Yadavas. Since then the Yadavas developed Brahmin hatred."

The chariot proceeded slowly. It entered the outskirts of Dwaraka. The city seemed to be in a disturbed state. Potters, brasssmiths, blacksmiths and tanners who inhabited the outer layer of the city gathered in the streets. Males and females stood in groups and were engaged in discussions of a serious nature. Surrounded by dirty atmosphere of people who didn't bathe in the morning, Parikshit felt the daybreak itself smoky and dull. At the request of Krishna, Balarama prohibited drink in Dwaraka. He too stopped drinking suddenly and people did not believe it. Hence they were discussing:

"One who does not consider the difficulties of the inhabitants cannot be called a ruler. We the people of hard work cannot live without drink. How can we do our work without drink? All day long we have to toil in the hot sun. One should drink and sleep well during the nights. Everything is attributed to the advent of Kali. All the educated people speak of Kali now-a-days. In fact they are the cause of the Kali behaviour. How can Balarama know our difficulties? He is a great man. He can afford to make people arrange a distillery for himself. Then he drinks and discusses philosophy with Krishna and the Brahmins."

Some fishermen interrupted them and said: "Why so many discussions? Do you want to drink? If you are sincere about it, we can supply. We started a distillery at the seashore and we are supplying. If you want it, it will be there in the houses by night. We are supplying various drinks to those who live in palaces. For three days, we have been supplying strong wine and many types of drinks to our leader, Kritavarma."

Parikshit closed his eyes, paid a deaf ear to the conversations and proceeded into the city, fixing his mind upon Krishna. The chariot was running along the back of the backwaters. The waters were stagnate, thick, black and stinking. The iron dust which was filed out of the metallic rod, which Samba gave birth to, was thrown in the backwaters by Balarama month days ago. It still remained there, polluted the backwaters and turned dark within one month. The soil got mixed up and the whole area became jet black. All along the back, there were tall, sturdy plants of a type of weed grass called Sara. It grew as tall as six feet and it was strong as iron. The growth of six feet height within one month was something onerously unnatural. The plants were tossing their heads to the breeze and showed their nodal structure. The spring nature of the weed made the plants appear like the springy iron rods moving to the wind in tension. The small tender leaves of the axillary buds at the nodes appeared like little sharp knives. In their curves they appeared like the clinging claws of the black scorpion. The weed grew across the area of a hundred yards along the banks of the backwaters. It glittered in its thick dark colour and gave an appearance which was loathsome and dreadful.

The chariot proceeded along the backwater drive and entered into the ninth gate. It reached Bharani triangle in the heart of the city. It stopped at the gates. Pradyumna, Anirudha, Samba, Charudeshna and others received him at the royal gate with smile. Parikshit got down the chariot, touched the feet of some and embraced some of them. They said: "My boy, the noble prince! We now meet after a very long time. We are immensely happy to receive you. Are all safe in Hastina? How is our grand old Emperor, Yudhishtira? How are Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva? Bye the bye, how is the noble queen? We do hope that all live in good cheer. Welcome to you. Our venerable father Krishna and Balarama will be happy to see you. The ladies and other relatives will know no bounds to their happiness. Now-a-days, the city is a little disturbed, Sage Viswamitra

came here a few days ago along with Kanva. Viswamitra grew angry upon us and cursed that all the people of the clans would perish. Of course, we do not care. We know many such curses in the past. They never come true. When our father, Lord Krishna, is protecting us, no evil can touch us. Some of the leaders of our clans were enraged by the behaviour of Viswamitra. They began to hate Brahmins and they insulted the Brahmins of the city. As a result the Brahmins left the city and went away. This untoward thing happened without the knowledge of our father and Balarama. It was all managed secretly. At last, all the Brahmin families, including Sudama, left. Before leaving, they entered the royal assembly and presented themselves to our father and uncle. Neither father nor uncle objected but allowed them to go away. They kept silent and the reason is not known."

They led Parikshit in, with all the royal splendour and honours. They rejoiced to lead him to all the relatives one by one. Parikshit made his appearance in the usual ceremonial approach and saw all of them. After he met Balarama and finished his interview with him, he wanted to see Krishna. Krishna was in his room upstairs and Parikshit was led thither. Krishna was sitting in his couch, silently gazing at the western ocean through the window. He was alone. Parikshit appeared before him and fell prostrate at his feet. Krishna received him warmly and said: "My dear prince! My joy is immense at the unexpected arrival of yours. Be seated." Parikshit sat and Pradyumna retired.

Krishna: "You will be made the king emperor within a short time. I hope Yudhishtira is training you in the various aspects of the statecraft. You are quick witted and I have all hopes about your career as an emperor. The future of this land lies in your hands. The slackening edifice of the Law will be duly renovated by you."

Parikshit: "Since I made my life your meditation, I feel that what you bless is fulfilled through me. All my grandfathers shower their affection upon me. They bear

the sweetest and the most tender attitude for me. Now-a-days they find time only to think of my future or the welfare of your Lordship. Their time is occupied in either explaining to me about some aspects of the statecraft or going into the meditation of your presence. Of late the king emperor feels a bit moody and discouraged, whenever he remembers you. Time and again he repeats that he feels like taking you to Hastina to enjoy your presence for sometime, rendering personal service to you."

Krishna : "Yes. It is the type of affection he has for me. Now I intend explaining to you a point or two about your administrative relationship with your people in the future. I hope you are ready to follow."

Parikshit : "May I be excused for a digression? I came to know that Brahminism has been insulted in Dwaraka, the city which enjoys your presence. Some Brahmins who came from Dwaraka reached Hastina and sheltered under the emperor. Is it true? How did it become possible?"

Krishna : "Yes. Not only in Dwaraka. It did happen all over the Yadava State. Some chiefs belonging to the five clans, Yadu, Vrishni, Bhoja, Andhaka and Kukura were enraged by the same type of behaviour from Viswamitra and Kanva. They started the campaign against the Brahmins. Human society is always an admixture of good and evil. An attempt to put an end to the evil causes some destruction among the good also. Kanva and Viswamitra are Brahmins by birth while they believed in violence. Of the two, Viswamitra was an ardent Kshatriya, who has been raised to Brahminhood. Hence the ardent nature continues. Both of them believe in the doctrine that destructive measures can put an end to injustice and lawlessness. To effect—the total destruction of the Yedavas, they cursed. The same curse was impending since thirty-six years, when Gandhari uttered her curse. The curse of Kanva and Viswamitra brought nothing new, but it enraged the wild feelings of the Yedavas. The result is that these two Brahmins left the other good

Brahmins homeless and without shelter. Now the feelings of the meat-eaters will persist in time. Pacifying is not easy with them.

"From the very beginning, it is understood in this land that the Law is the only one that protects the welfare of the beings. The foundation of The Law is Veda and this is what the first Manu has ordained. One who can explain the Law is called a Brahmin. One who can explain and live according to it as an example is called a Rishi.

"The Law cannot be directly appreciated by all and consequently all people do not follow the Law of their own accord and freewill. Instead, they hate law-abiders due to their inferiority complex. Those who do not follow the Law of their own accord, will follow it out of fear. Everyone follows the Law, when he is made helpless. For this reason, it is necessary that power should be directed by way of rulership and administration. For this, the Creator made the administrative power manifest among the human beings. The features of this power are inculcated to the race as lessons by the first Manu. He had kept the Law for the Brahmins and the Law for the rulers supplementary and intertwined. A Brahmin and a Kshatriya should inculcate and execute the Law among others. When the Brahmin and the Kshatriya become perfect, they attain the position of Rishis. The Brahmin and the Kshatriya are to work out the Law in the society, when the Rishis are to rearrange the matters and decide the issues. All the others should be made to follow the Law. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas should exercise the Law and use the measure of punishment as per the need wherever there is disobedience. If the Kshatriya begins to disobey, then the rulers are replaced by plunderers and robbers. The Government will be gradually filled with loots and they afflict the society. If a Brahmin begins to transgress, then the texture of Law will give a way. When once the strings are broken, it is not in the hands of any one to restore. Constitution of the States goes to pieces and wanes in course of time. The society will be filled with units of evil forces. It

may take ages before the individuals come to a state of human understanding. Worst of all, if a Rishi were to transgress the Law, then that means a human understanding is defiled by hatred. Then the curse, the war and the misbehaviour are the things that follow. It is the end of the race, the nation and the constitution. Beastly attitudes walk on earth in flesh and blood and begin to rule. Sense of security becomes a lost commodity."

Parikshit : "Under such conditions, is it desirable for the Kshatriya to inflict punishment or to use violences of the required magnitude ?

Krishna : "Nothing wrong in using it. But the result will always be similar to that of the Mahabharata war.

Parikshit : "When you know all these things and when you can control all these levels, was it not possible for you to use some violence ?

Krishna : "Yes. Violence in the shape of punishment is always present as an effective measure. But whom to punish ? Shall I punish the so-called Rishis Kanva and Viswamitra ? If I do so, no one will care the Rishis and their path henceforth. Or, could I have punished the Yadavas ? It is no better than killing a beast. Killing an evil genius like Sisupala or Jarasandha helps the world. Killing the venomous creatures like serpents or tigers saves some lives. Putting an end to an outlaw, a criminal or a revolutionary will save some. The Yadavas are neither evil, nor venomous. They know everything, they cannot follow what they know as good. They are weak people, not wicked people. Killing the wicked saves others, but killing the weak people is of no avail. If we go on killing the weak, then nobody is left to be saved or ruled. This issue has no solution. Such nodal points are called 'time sweeps.' Time rules despotically, with a rod of iron, straight to destruction. If the trees shed their leaves in autumn, are we to find fault with them and kill them ? When such fools step into lawlessness, fight and destroy each other, then the witness to it is also

considered guilty. That is the reason why Balarama left for pilgrimage tour, when the Mahabharata war was precipitating. It was possible for him to avoid and it was not possible for me. Your grandfathers followed the lawful path and took refuge in me. For that reason, I had no right to desert them and I supported them. Though I stood as a witness, I was considered guilty by Gandhari. She cursed and the curse effected the Yadavas and not me. Gandhari believed that the Pandavas killed the Kauravas and I directed them to kill. In fact, it was the Law that killed Kauravas and not Pandavas. At the same time, Gandhari was an incarnate of concentrated austerity. Since her childhood till her end, she knew nothing but devotion to her husband. Great power of penance was condensed in her. It effected the Yadavas in the form of the curse. There was no reason for her to curse the Yadavas, since she was displeased with me and not the Yadavas. It was a causeless course of action. The cause of all these is only one and that is to relieve the earth of its burdens. The whole activity is interlinked with my birth.

Parikshit : "It was confident hitherto that I could understand the Law in its true form and I learnt the way to discharge my duties in an impersonal way. Now I have another eye-opening. A thorough knowledge of what is right and what is wrong and the capacity to discharge rightful duties cannot change the future of mankind. It is not in the hands of anyone with any amount of knowledge and capacity to act. This is what I could understand now.

Krishna : "Some of those who realise this will retire to the forests and live away their span by following the path of inaction and leading a life of penance. Then they are deprived of the very purpose of the very birth, which includes the right use of the mind, senses and organs. Some others, who know will keep quiet, saying that the whole world follows its own nature. Such people experience a fall since they fail to discharge the expected duties. The whole creation comes out of the nature which is its own nature. Every individual has his own nature, which is bound by the environment and

which cannot express itself freely. If this is allowed, life is an admixture of sorrow and happiness and incidents are mistaken as life. Individual natures of different behaviour should co-exist, so that they find a common nature according to which they can live. This needs training and for this training, Manu had prescribed the institution which we call family. There is no better institution to that end. Marriage and coupled life form the course of study. One who accepts to work as the head of a family and train the members to that end, automatically takes up the role of a Creator on the background of The Creation, which comes down from the One Creator, through his nature. By accepting such a responsibility, the individual natures are trained into a group nature. The next step is that Manu organised villages with families as units. Then he found the need for the four-fold classification of the society: The Man of Knowledge, the Man of Administration, the Man of Production and Distribution and the Man of Work. By giving such a structure, the Man has become a Creator in his turn. The effect is the production of a group nature village-wise. Such villages, hamlets, towns and cities are to be administered by the ruler, who should act as a seer and a king, Rajaishi. This imparts a bigger group nature, which we call the Nation. Individual natures work in it, as the limbs and senses work for a body. In such a type of administrative procedure, the individual nature acts tuned with the nature of the living beings. This is called World Goodwill. By practising it, the human individual becomes aware of Omnipresence and we call it Parabrahman. The individual nature, when acts according to the Omnipresence, is known as Soul or the Soul Consciousness.

Parikshit: "The grand vision of the whole universe as one personality comes to my mind's eye. To achieve this state, what should a ruler do?"

Krishna: "When individuals try to achieve this, it is only partially achieved. When they begin to work it out with the society, then there is the birth of the rulers. For a ruler, it is possible to realise this end fully. The method

is the proper procedure to work out the Law in its three-fold application. The three-fold human values termed as Duty, Outcome and Fulfilment should be brought to equilibrium. By working out the Law, one does one's duty. This brings him the fruits of his work in the form of returns. When the fruits are properly utilised, there is fulfilment, or enjoyment that results in personal satisfaction and satiation of the needs. This satiation is the most coveted one of the three and hence the beings go into confusion. When the purpose of this satiation is remembered as the upholding of the Law and the discharging of the duties, then the outcome is the protection of the Law and the happiness of the individual. As long as the purpose of enjoyment is to uphold the Law, then the wheel of activity runs and keeps on running. The field of action to work this out, is one's own profession. Profession should be suited to individual nature and the individual nature should be focussed towards its profession. This attempt imbeds the Eternal Wisdom or Veda in it. The scheme of professions imbed the secret of the Veda. To know the Veda and to make people follow it, are the duties of the Brahmin and the ruler. If the profession is ignored and Veda is studied then the result is the necessity to beg and live. Make the traditional professions as the subjects of study in your ritual schools, when you begin to rule. As long as man co-ordinates, the activity of the body with that of the mind the kingdom runs wealthy. Agriculture, livestock and house-making should be the centres of the various branches of education. When man leaves these centres of activity, and gets himself educated into the various subjects, he learns the craft of the middle man and he begins to plunder the society. Exchange without production ends in inflation and destruction. By following education with the above said three activities as objectives, one gets habituated with impersonal work and this is what is called Yagna. For this reason, the concept of Yagna as the main branch of wisdom is protected by the Rishis in our land. It is the spirit of sacrifice which becomes natural, what is understood as Yagna.

Parikshit : " Horse Sacrifice, Man Sacrifice and the various animal sacrifices are prescribed for the rulers. Am I to kill the animals and perform these sacrifices, when I become the ruler ?

Krishna : " In its true sense, Horse Sacrifice means tending the horse and using it to serve the society. Animal Sacrifice is to tend the animals and use them wisely for the satisfaction of the society. Man Sacrifice means training man to offer himself in the service of the One who is Omnipresent. This is the real sense of Eternal Values and hence it is the real Vedic Sacrifice. Any creature, when used for the welfare of creation, becomes a being of a sacrifice. Even man, when knows his purpose, becomes an epitome of sacrifice or Yagna. Apart from this concept, there are many types of animal killings in the name of sacrifices. These are found in some volumes that are linked up with the Vedic texts. I am sorry to say that these killings are framed by some Brahmins, who were carnivorous gluttons. Slaves of senses, who became scholars, found the art of framing the killing and sanctifying it in the name of Sacrifices. They managed to construct a literature of it and link it up with the Vedic texts. Plagiarism and interpolation are the two main traits that are characteristic of the human brain of this land. The Vedic texts have been polluted in time due to these two traits. A wise one is expected to brush the Vedic texts from time to time, by recopying them from the Constitutional Law that governs nature. Observe nature and know how it works. See how the flower bears the fruit, the animal begets the child and the human being carves out the personality of his child. In this way, you grow aware of the activity of nature and understand what is good and what is bad for you to act. Then copy it down as a book. Once again you have a genuine copy of the Vedic text. Do not take the existing texts of any scripture verbatim. At the same time, do not grow weak to reject the scripture. You have the advantage of my presence in your pure meditation. Meditate upon me and you will germinate the tree of the Veda in its branches

and leaves. The various measures unfold as its leaves. Observe the evolution and involution of the seasons through the cycle of the year. Your lot of action will be dictated as your scripture and may your years of span be filled with your lot. I am in you. Take this as your scripture and do not step back in laying the Law while you rule. Whenever it is necessary, you will have presence of the Eternal Intelligences in the form of the Divine Rishis like Narada and the Masters of Wisdom like Maitreya, Maru, Devapi and Djwhalkhul. They will lead you along the right path.

Parikshit : " My grandfathers have performed the animal sacrifices by killing the animals. How could it be possible ?

Krishna : " Tradition binds man. The Royal Priests like Dhaumya are bred and brought up in tradition and they directed the rituals in the name of sacrifices in their own traditional way. When there is a call to attend a good intentioned gathering, I do not refuse to attend, nor Vyasa refuses. We do not like to criticise traditions, since it has no better result than leaving the public in confusion. Criticism is no directive. This is the reason why Vyasa and I attended the animal sacrifices conducted by your grandfathers. At the same time, we engraft right traditions to work out in the minds of men in course of time. We believe in leaving the public wiser to choose its own better alternatives. We always intend directing the minds from the fallen concept of animal killing to the real concept of Yagna. To this effect, Vyasa and his followers have gathered groups of seers in centres like Krishnadwipa, Naimisha, Badarikashram, etc. There the seers have gathered for life to discuss, decide and rearrange the texts in their original light to be handed down to posterity. The result is the birth of the Purana collection. These Rishis have made a sacrifice of their life for it. I live in them as the common presence of the Eternal Wisdom. I intend enlightening the future in course of time.

Filled with tears of joy, Parikshit's hair stood erect with inspiration. With folded hands, he prostrated before the Lord and touched his feet.

Chapter 20

It was the ninth day of the darker half of the last lunar month, Phalguna. It was almost the fag-end of the lunar year Bahudhanya. None of the inhabitants of Dwaraka slept. They were busy in getting the chariots and bullock carts ready for the pleasure trip. Some carts carried big cooking vessels, serving vessels, plates, tumblers and the other items of crockery. Some carts were loaded with all types of valuable garments, vests, shirts, skirts, turbans and sarcees. Some carts were heavy with crowns, shields, armour, lances, spears and swords. Some carts were filled with barrels of ghee, milk and other items of fire sacrifice. Thousands of cows were gathered for the Godana ceremony. Carts drawn each by two bullocks stood in rows in the darkness and appeared like so many centepedes. The jingling of the bronze bells hanging down the necks of plump bullocks were being heard from a distance. As the bulls tossed their heads with the ornamental tufts, their eyes glittered with the reflection of the ninth phase moon. The moon above the Eastern sky appeared like the nail mark of the hand of time that plucked the outgoing year away. The ladies with ornaments and fine robes sat in the covered carts. They were talking to themselves, as the carts made a start. All the Yadavas of the two generations gathered at the Bharani Sringataka. They were clean and pure after the ceremonial head baths and their hair was tossing in the breeze.

Krishna and Balarama washed the feet of their parents and sprinkled the holy water on their heads. Then they worshipped the holy feet of their parents with sandal-wood and

sacred rice. After them, Pradyumna, Samba, Aniruddha and other youths bowed down to their feet. Vasudeva and his wife gave Sindoor brow marks to all and sprinkled sacred rice upon their heads in blessing. Holy Brahmins invited by Krishna and Balarama from Hastina, Indraprastha and Kundina, chanted the Vedic hymns and the mantras of a successful journey. As Krishna waved his hand, the procession started. As the carts proceeded in rows in the darkness, they appeared like so many rows of ants crawling. Armed youth walked on either side of the rows of the carts. Satyaki, Kritavarma and other chiefs proceeded in chariots, while Krishna and Balarama were walking together. From the day Krishna's chariot took fire, Krishna and Balarama did not use chariots. The sea tide of Dwaraka appeared to be in a hurry about something. Waves of increasing speed and height chased one another. The sea was turbulent. The day broke when the whole procession was going along the way beside the backwaters. Yadava youths walked jumping and shouting with all merriment. A lighter mood prevailed in them and they walked on in sundry ways. Some of them got into the backwaters. A few of them plucked the reeds of the iron hard black weed. They held them in their hands and they were six feet high. One of the Yadavas shouted. "This triangular weed is very much like a spear." The others were also attracted by it and each plucked one among the black weeds. They held them in their hands and walked jumping. They said, "Nowhere we have seen such a type of black weed till now. The reeds are very much like iron bars. The leaves resemble small daggers. One can use them as weapons and fight a war."

Krishna and Balarama were observing the whole scene. Balarama was surprised to see that even aged people were behaving emotionally like youths and children. Their excitement was something unusual. Balarama said to Krishna: "My brother! It is more than a month, since Samba begot an iron club at the curse of Viswamitra. I got it filed into fine powder and thrown into the backwaters. The iron filings

did not get mixed up in the water. They floated and formed a thick black layer. This weed, born out of thick layer, has grown this much tall within one month. Now it stands stout and strong. The way in which these people hold these weeds in their hands and prattle raises many doubts in my mind." Krishna kept silent and smiled, as he walked.

The same afternoon, they reached the destination. It was a forest garden on the shores of the Western sea. It was called the Prabhasa Theertha. The forest gardens belonged to the Yadavas. They were very spacious and they encompassed groves of coconut, mango, guva and goosberry. At planned distances, there were rest-houses and cottages throughout the jungle. On one side, there were the big shade-giving peepals, banians and neems. At a distance there were the age old teaks and cedars. In the inner layer, the camphor trees were breathing fragrance into the winds. The dark thickset tamala trees emitted the smells of the elephant myrrh. The neem trees were tossing their heads with all the splendour of the bud and blossom and the tender leaves. They were converting the heat of the sun into mild, cool breeze. Under the trees, one could find heaps of the neem buds like the heaps of the broken splinters of pearls. The orderlies of the rest-houses had sprinkled fragrant water over the sand before the foot-steps. The sand was wet and smooth. The footsteps of the hen and cock could be seen as beautiful prints on the surface of the wet sand. Peacocks with folded tails were changing positions amidst the green boughs of the big trees. It was just the beginning season for the cuckoo's songs. Parrots were flying in groups, chirping.

Young boys among the visitors climbed up the coconut trees and made a party of sumptuous coconut water to all. It was refreshing after the journey in the hot sun. Some boys got upon the branches of trees and played the famous monkey game. Some elderly ladies stood in the porticos of the rest-houses and gazed at the beauty of nature. Some middle aged women were running and playing in groups, after tightening their garments. On such occasions, many

of them remember the days of their childhood in their father's houses. Some old ladies invaded jasmine bushes. Prying and peeping and rising on single foot and toe, they plucked each flower patiently and filled the baskets. Then they sprinkled water upon the flowers and made beautiful garlands of delicate patterns. Then they decorated the hair dress of the young ladies with these garlands.

Pradyumna, Samba and Aniruddha spread open the many palmyra mats and heaped the rice meal they brought from the very big brass pots. They brought curds of sour cream in cauldrons and mixed it with the rice. They prepared tasty, beautiful globes of curd rice. Then they distributed it to all in green lotus leaves. Each one took his curd lunch and began to enjoy the taste with lemon pickle and the mango pickle, under the shade of the trees.

Krishna said to Balarama : " Brother, I am reminded of our childhood days. We used to go about the forest, tending the cows of our father Nandagopa. In the afternoons, we used to enjoy the same type of lunch. At that age, we had no idea how the world was. These globes of tasty curd rice were everything and all to us. Brahmin boys, the children of our preceptors used to accompany us. We gave them this meal, before we ate. As we saw them eating, we felt that all the three worlds were enjoying. "

As Krishna was recounting the incidents of his childhood, Rukmini, Satya and Revati stood listening. Rukmini said, " Why don't you feel the pleasure of the same childhood days even now ? You are always childlike. Even at this age, childlike behaviour is natural to you. "

Krishna : " May be true. But it is possible only when all the others become cowherd boys. The very day I received your love letter from Kundina, I lost my childhood and became a youth. "

Satyabhama : " It is always true with our Lord that the rural cowherds are dearer to him. Even at this age, our Lord feels young, whenever we speak of the Gopis. "

Balarama : " The young spirit of your Lord, My brother, is the one thing, which is not to be comprehended properly by you, people. Throughout your life, you strove to win the affection of your Lord. The Gopis lived to offer their affection to him. This subtle distinction is not yet comprehended even by the great Rishis, who have gone through the Vedas and other scriptures. "

Revati : " May it be so. What prompted you both to leave the Gopis there and seek us in the palaces to get yourselves married ? We enjoyed your presence and your enjoyment of our presence has been a proxy all the while. Had it not been better if you brought those Gopis here and married them ? "

Balarama : " The affection of the Gopis never demanded marriages, dinners and royal customs. "

Krishna : " Whenever we returned home, the Gopis enquired what we wanted. Whenever we returned home you enquire what laurels we brought home. Our wives love our greatness and splendour. The Gopis loved us and our childhood. "

The rest of the day was spent in enjoying the various conversations, games and the various dishes of supper. They gathered in groups and were talking freely about many things late into the night. Krishna sat down under a tree in his cross-leg posture upon a palmyrah mat. He made himself comfortable and began playing music upon his flute. The music started as a stir from his heart. It crept into the barrel of the flute and got distributed through the holes into the slow-moving tree breezes. It filled the dark of the whole forest. One by one the Yadus came attracted and sat near him. Like the many calves drawn by the rope, all the males, females and children gathered round him and merged in the music. They forgot the presence of their bodies. The bodies were placed there safe and they came out as experiences of the various phases of the music. Merged in the flute music, they lost themselves and they danced in spirit, suspended in space as the many facets of the flute music. Even the bird

and the beast were transported into the realm of the spirit. Cobras glided down the branches of the trees and nodded with lifted hoods. Even the branches of the trees nodded in the music-mixed breeze and stood bent towards Krishna, with tossing twigs. All the forest with all the inhabitants melted into the one existence, of the Music of the Soul. Time forgot its movement and there was a lull.

Krishna stopped playing music and stood up silently. He went round the nooks and corners of the surrounding groves, which were half visible in the light of the tenth phase moon. He went round and came to the same spot. No one moved. Their consciousness was not in their bodies. They were not themselves.

Krishna patted everyone and brought them to consciousness. He said: "Your programme for today is prolonged and laborious. All of you should get up, take your bath before it is sunrise and get into the preparation of the various foods. From the time of sunrise, we have the worship of the God and the programme is more than your expectations."

Chapter 21

All the members finished their bath quite early, dressed in finery and well-decorated, they got ready before it was dawn. The fire-places for cooking were dug out on the previous day itself. So they started cooking. Preparations for vegetarian Brahmins were being made separately by Brahmin cooks. At a distance, another set of cooks began to prepare spicy dishes of pork and the meat of stag and hare. Adjoining the cooking place of the Brahmins, to the south, there was a building with a big hall. Brahmins gathered in the hall and finished their morning routine. Then they prepared fire-places with red clay. They squared them with the sacred fire-places and kindled the fires. Fire offerings began before it was dawn. Fragrant fumes permeated in all directions along with the sounds of Vedic chants. People of the different clans sat in couples and worshipped sacred fire. Continuously fire worship with ghee and sacred herbs was followed by the bathing of the gods with the water of holy rivers. Then there was the worship with flowers, perfumes and foods. Krishna worshipped Lord Siva and his spouse, the Daughter of the Mount. He intended it for the welfare of the whole creation and then conducted the Cosmic Ritual. Balarama installed the images of the inhabitants of the serpent world. He worshipped Vasuki. Karkotaka and Iravata according to the procedure prescribed. Towards the end of their worship, Krishna and Balarama offered cows, lands and cereals along with gold to the Brahmin families. Shawls, gem-studded carpets, silks with gold fabric, rugs, perfumes, silver-handled staffs and footwear decorated with golden border were given as offerings.

to the Brahmins. To their wives, the ladies offered costly sarees, jewellery of gold, pearl necklaces, turmeric, sindoor and perfumes. The eight wives of Krishna smeared turmeric paste to the feet of the Brahmin ladies and applied sindoor brow marks. Then they worshipped them. All the couples worshipped Brahmin couples and made their offering to their devotion in profusion. It was noon when the whole ritual was finished.

It was proposed to serve food for the Brahmin families first. When the preparations were going on, some boys gathered the cooked materials on mats and carried them into the nearby groves. There they kept them and invited the monkeys from the trees. Monkeys got down in groups, carried away the food materials intended to be served to Brahmins and ate them sumptuously. Not a morsel was left behind. Children and adults enjoyed the scene, shouting and leaping in merriment. The ladies felt sorry about it and began to shout and weep. Kritavarma, who was enjoying the scene along with the mischievous boys and youths, came to the front and said :

"There is nothing untoward in the things that happened. In our view all the living beings are one. Whether the monkeys ate or the Brahmins ate, we find no difference. Offering food is the one thing that is important. Our people are offering these things according to what they think good. I do not find anything wrong. I stand here to cut the throats of those who find fault with us and object our procedure. Every one among you thinks that he knows everything and every one remarks about everything. You people think that you know all. It is too much to think that every one can command and dictate matters. You shut up !"

His conversation was cutshort and hushed, when he heard someone shouting, "I now proceed to cut off your throat this moment. See it any one can stop it." As Kritavarma raised his head and looked, he saw Satyaki shouting in deadly fury. With a drawn sword, Satyaki was rushing

towards Kritavarma. He was stopped by Pradyumna and Samba half way. Pradyumna implored Satyaki to get himself composed and made him push his sword into the sheath. The situation was controlled.

The Brahmins that were invited to receive offerings had nothing to eat. Along with their wives and children, they quenched their hunger with water. They received the salutations of Krishna and Balarama, blessed them and took leave to depart. Krishna in his boundless compassion directed them to go to Hastina and approach Parikshit. As the Brahmins departed, Balarama walked a few paces, hid his face and wiped tears from his eyes.

Lunch was served under trees. All except a few enjoyed the profusion of spicy dishes, made with pork and the flesh of stag and hare. Sauces, puddings and porridges exhaled flavours of ghee and the aroma of cloves. The Yadus relished the dishes and ate their full. Krishna with his eight spouses, Balarama and his wife Revati and their children did not eat. Of course, Krishna never touches flesh. The other felt miserable about the Brahmin families and hence they abstained from food. Many of the ladies who belonged to Kritavarma's family also did not eat, since they too felt bad about the Brahmins going without eating. They satisfied their appetite with water and stood aloof.

After lunch, all the ladies retired to the rest-houses. The heat of the day made them take a nap in their rooms. Krishna, Balarama, Satyaki and Pradyumna sat under the shade of a big tree. With afflicted minds, they discussed recent happenings. Heaps of the black sea-weed lay under the tree on one side. They are the black reeds of sea-weeds, plucked by the youths for merriment the other day. Satyaki took one into his hands and was observing its parts curiously.

Kritavarma came there with his group. Kritavarma's group rolled barrels of wine and broke them open. These barrels were brought secretly and kept concealed. Now they opened them and began to cheer the party with pegs

and mugs. Mug after mug made the fellows wet and warm with the very costly liquor. Kritavarma's people lost their heads. They grew impetuous and began to drink in the immediate presence of Krishna and Balarama, though they knew it was prohibited. Further they handed over mugs of wine to Pradyumna and the other youths of Krishna's family. They too gulped mug after mug until they were full. Kritavarma reached the height of his senseless behaviour when he handed over two full mugs to Krishna and Balarama. Krishna's eyes grew red with rage. He slipped out of the scene in silence. Balarama could not control his anger. He took the mug and hatefully threw it on the face of Kritavarma. Kritavarma did not heed it. He wiped his face smiling. Then he turned to Satyaki and said: "Was it you that prattled, when we were feeding the monkeys? Words full of wrath and spite reached my ears. May I know who is the hero of the soliloquy? I hope it was yourself! I think that your valour pushes you towards your own end."

Satyaki laughed wildly with anger. He said to Pradyumna: "Now the valorous hero Kritavarma makes his entrance! He speaks of valour and heroism! If I remember well, he is the one who killed infants, while they were sleeping, when he worked as a colleague in war to the fallen Brahmin, Aswathama."

Kritavarma: "Hold your tongue! You talk nonsense. It was only to satisfy Duryodhana by fulfilling his last wish that we killed the children of Pandavas. It is stupid to attribute it to our incapacity. Your Krishna is the one who brought about splits among our clans first. You may consider him as your God. We are very sorry to express that the procedure of Krishna is immoral and devoid of any sense. And what about this great hero Satyaki? He cut off the head of the corpse of Bhurisravas in war, after he was killed by Arjuna."

Satyaki: "A few words more from your lips force us to put an end to you. Even the brother of this Kritavarma

was cruel and mean in killing Satrajit, when he was sleeping. He tortured him to death and took away Syamantaka. My Lord! he had committed this unpardonable sin in your absence and caused great sorrow to the noble lady Satya. Both the brothers Kritavarma and Satadhanva are incarnation of meanness. If I kill Kritavarma and cut him to pieces while he is sleeping, I do not find anything wrong. But I need not stoop to such filthy levels. I have my own valour tested through my age in wars. See how I kill him right now."

When Satyaki uttered these words, Pradyumna felt like playfully beating Kritavarma across the chest with the rod of the sea-weed. As he hit and drew the weed, he found Kritavarma's skin peeled out along with a part of the inner tissue across the chest. Layers of skin and flesh came out loose like the sacred thread. Kritavarma drew out his sword in a flash to kill Pradyumna. Before that Satyaki thrust his dagger into the chest of Kritavarma and saved Pradyumna. It all happened in lightning speed. Kritavarma fell on the ground kicking and elbowing the ground with his reflexes. Satyaki drew his sword and cut the head of Kritavarma. Blood rose like a jet into the air and made the sand wet. The scene provoked the Bhojas and Andhakas, who witnessed it. They surrounded Satyaki and others and tried to put an end to them. Some one lifted his sword to cut the throat of Satyaki, when Pradyumna slashed the hand with his sword. The cut hand fell down and Satyaki was saved. Satyaki felt inspired by the valour of Pradyumna and began his campaign of slaughter. Pradyumna and Satyaki advanced in two different directions and killed a number of people among the Bhojas and Andhakas. The fight became intense. Swords met swords and the metallic sounds reverberated the whole space. Heads dismantled from bodies danced in the air. Noses and ears jumped out of the faces. Skulls soared up and fell down. Blood began to shower into pools that found their way into the sea waters. The rest of the people grew mad of the situation. Each one picked up a black rod

from sea-weeds and began to beat others. No one was conscious of what he was doing. A spell of desperation possessed every one.

Each one beat the others and it was a scene of slaughter at work. Muscles and bones and bowels and pieces of limbs fell out exposed and bodies fell down one by one. Satyaki, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Samba and Charudeshna proceeded in all directions and began to give full play to their swords. Their swords grazed upon the heads of the other parties in tens and twenties. Each one rushed to kill a good number of others, while the others began to play the same game in full combat and competition. Since each began to kill many, there was mutual annihilation and the ground was cleared. Within twenty minutes, every one killed the other and died in the battle. The place looked like the dining place of demons and evils. The whole perspective was a mess of severed eye balls, noses, ears and parts of limbs with bone and marrow exposed. The whole carnage took place so swiftly that the ladies sleeping in the rest-houses came to senses only to see the remnants of the previously existing beings. The suddenness of the situation shocked them beyond measure so that they could not make out anything for a while. Some of them fainted. Some closed their eyes with their hands and screamed their hearts out. Some reeled and fell to the ground. Krishna and Balarama stood aside and witnessed the whole of the scene with its loathsome culmination. Their faces remain unchanged. They showed neither anger nor loathing and they stood like statues of stone. Slowly the fainted ladies came to senses one by one. Their cries started feebly in a low tone and increased until they reverberated the vault of the sky above.

Balarama turned back and slowly proceeded towards the thickness of the shrubs of the jungle. Krishna stood without a wink. The one remaining Yadava, Babhru by name stood beside Krishna and gazed at the whole scene. He became stiff and his eyes did not wink. In a sudden jerk,

he screamed out and broke into deep cries. He covered his face with his hands and cried out : "Alas ! alas ! what a dreadful thing ! "

Krishna did not speak. Babhru approached the ladies one by one and fell into a spell of uncontrollable sobbing and weeping. Then he turned back and approached Krishna, stood by his side and said :

" Everything is finished with lightning speed. Time licked off every one. No one is left !

Krishna did not speak. Babhru asked : " Sir ! what is it that we are to do now ? "

Krishna kept silent.

Babhru : " We will approach Balarama and follow his instructions. "

Both of them searched for Balarama and at last approached him. The chariot driver Daruka stood beside Balarama weeping and crying.

Krishna : " My brother ! Whom should we inform about this ? Since Yudhishtira is the King Emperor, we have a duty to report to him about all that has happened. Let us send Daruka to the Pandavas. Let him explain to them what has happened and inform Arjuna that I asked him to go over to Dwaraka. "

Balarama : " Yes, that's all we can do. "

Krishna : " Daruka ! Hurry to Hastina by this chariot as soon as possible. Convey the news to the Pandavas. Ask Arjuna to go over to Dwaraka by my word and get him in your chariot. "

Daruka bowed down, yoked the steeds to the chariot and left the place. Krishna looked into the eyes of Babhru and said : " No use of weeping. Take these ladies of the harem in the chariots. Leaving them and the chariots at home you return to us. Make haste. Time is short. "

Babhrū bowed down in salutation and started. As he proceeded ten yards, an arrow was shot by someone from behind the bushes. It hit Babhrū and pierced his ribs. Babhrū fell down to the ground with a cry of pain. After a few jerks he was no more. Balarama ran speedily into the bushes wherefrom the arrow was shot. One among the hill tribes, who hid himself in the bushes with an arrow and a bow, fled at high speed and disappeared into the byepaths.

Evidently he was one of those bands of anarchists who awaited to attack Dwaraka under the banner of Ekalavya. He is a resident of the Govardhana jungles. Balarama tried to chase him but the fellow disappeared. Balarama came back and joined Krishna.

Krishna : "My brother ! Do you notice the strange culmination of the chain of events ? Thirty-six years ago, the hundred sons of the blind king died in the war and no one was left. In her sorrow, Gandhari cursed that all the Yadavas would die like that and no one would be left. Viswamitra uttered the same thing parrot-like. I don't know whose curse came down and materialised. No one is left among these fellows today. "

Balarama : "Durvasa was crazy enough to curse you also, my brother. Now it is my duty to see that these hillmen do not harm you.

Krishna : "Whatever is to happen will happen. I will rush to Dwaraka with these ladies, chariots, horses and elephants. I will leave them there and join you soon. Kindly wait here under the shade of this tree until I return. I request you not to go anywhere. "

Balarama : "Where can I go, leaving you alone ? Take them all to Dwaraka and leave them there. "

As they spoke, they heard the continuous moans and cries of the ladies. Krishna made the ladies take care of the articles that were brought there. He saw that they got into the chariots and the carts. He conducted them safely to Dwaraka.

Chapter 22

Vasudeva came to know of all that had happened before Krishna reached Dwaraka by the evening. He burst out into lamentations and sobbed like a child. He slowly staggered his way to the royal gate at Bharani Sringataka. There he waited with feeble, vacant looks. The attendants and maids tried to console him. In the meanwhile, chariots came and stopped before the gates. All the bereaved women of the harem rushed out of the chariots and carts, with outbursts of emotions, peals of cries and gushes of tears. As the ladies saw Vasudeva, they fell to the ground before his feet and cried out. With the help of the attendant maids, Krishna could lead Rukmini, Satyabhama and other ladies of the harem into the palace hall with great difficulty. Vasudeva followed them.

Rukmini : " Our children were never in the habit of harming anyone any day. How is it that they met with such a fate? No one could imagine that we stirred out of the house with such a cruel trend of destiny ahead. Had you asked us to stop, such a thing could have been averted, I think. Your sons are great enough to control the elements, elementals and the beings. How is it that they did not interfere to save our kinsfolk? I am not able to believe that they could not foresee these events. "

Krishna : " When once an incident has happened, it is vain to question if one could anticipate it or not. Now we are concerned only with what we have to do. Before my parents I put forth the procedure of what I am to do, O noble

father ! O affectionate mother ! You see how the tidings drifted in their own course. Years ago, I had to witness all the destruction of the Mahabharata War. Today I had to witness the total destruction of all the Yadus. Two great devastations occurred before my eyes. Now I have no mind to stay here. I cannot bear the sight of the vacant city after living with all these people for such a long time. My brother Balarama stayed back in the jungles and did not have an inclination to enter the city. I too want to go into the forests and spend the rest of my life in penance. I came to take your permission. ”

Vasudeva : “ And what are you going to do with me ? ”

Krishna sat at the feet of Vasudeva, pressing the holy feet of the father with his hands. He said : “ I sent word to Arjuna. He will be here by tomorrow. Everything takes shape in his hands, through his instrumentality. In the meanwhile, you are the one to take care of this city and the ladies of the harem. The crevice formed in the Govatsa plateau is giving way and becoming wider day by day. Day after tomorrow will be Trayodasi. On the same day, Chaturdasi and Amavasya will occur. Three moon phases take place in a day along with the conjunction of the node. There will be a total solar eclipse on that day and with that the year ends. The next day is the beginning of the lunar year Pramadhi. On the fifth lunar day of the year, that is on the eighth day from today, the city of Dwaraka will go into the sea, being, gulped by the titanic waves of the western ocean. Before that the inhabitants of the city are to be directed to vacate, so that they may be saved. Direct Arjuna to conduct the whole show as per my word.

“ My noble father ! My affectionate mother ! Yours is a life of many hardships. The very commencement of your enjoyable career gave you the experience of prolonged imprisonment by Kamsa. When I was born, you had to take me away through the night and see that I reach Vraja safely, I owe my existence to you. I was able to set you free from bondage of imprisonment. I have the fortune to bring you

here and worship your feet in my house for more than a hundred years. Extend the same compassion to me and permit me to embrace the life of the forest."

Saying so, Krishna touched the lotus feet of his parents, bowed down and stood before them. Vasudeva said:

"My boy ! There was no occasion when I objected to any of your plans. Let it come to pass according to your will."

Krishna took leave of his parents and set out. He never turned back towards anyone of the harem. He had no inclination to enter the palace and get involved in conversation with anyone. Straight he walked to the scene of the dismal action. By that time Balarama sat down in the lotus posture. He went into Samadhi and he didn't move. The rays of the setting sun flooded his frame and Balarama shone red like a melting statue of red rays. The rays stood up around him and appeared like the coiled body of a red serpent with many raised hoods. In the light and shade, amidst the red rays, the spirit of Balarama appeared to fill the cavity of space between heaven and earth. The serpent with the many hoods appeared uncoiling itself and slowly rising up. Then it was sunset. Darkness filled the deep of space. The many hoods of the serpent seemed to rise in darkness to the vault of heavens. Stars began to twinkle like the many gems on the hoods of the serpent. The serpent uncoiled itself like the dark, imperceptible body of a unit time. It began to glide and find its way into the ocean with its graceful curves marked by the merging and emerging waves of the seashore. The waves receded. The body of Balarama slid down and tilted upon the bare earth under the tree. Stars twinkled and reflected upon the waves of the ocean. They appeared like the gems on the hoods of many divine serpents nodding their heads to receive Balarama into their kingdom.

Krishna stood in darkness and gazed at the waves of the ocean. Slowly he took out his flute from his waist band and began to play on it. Music started in his heart as a proposal.

It expressed itself as a spell of his breath passing through his lips into the holes of the mystic flute. The murmur of sea waves tuned to his music and served as a background. Huge waves were breaking at the shore periodically. The sounds were heard as a drum beat. Krishna was absorbed in his own music. There was no one else to get absorbed. The contents of the dark cave of space seemed merged in his music as the one content and his music seemed to merge in the darkness. Everything was fused into darkness, the one content of the Egg of Space. Only the one field of musical darkness stood against the background of darkness which was around him. The Lord perceived it as he once did in the form of the Great Boar, before anything was born and long before the beginning of Time.

A presence was felt at a distance. Someone was approaching Krishna as though he was drawn thither by the music in darkness. Guided by the direction of music, he might be travelling straight. Subtle is the path of the one who is able to trace the source of music. Such a sense of hearing must be a perfect and flawless one indeed! He is able to trace the spot wherefrom the music was being externalised. He came straight and stood before Krishna. In olden days when the Lord was a child, the cowherd ladies might have followed the same path to reach it. Now this one also must be of the same stock. Krishna looked at him. He recognised that it was Uddhava. The Lord did not stop the music. Uddhava stood silent. His body was fixed and he got himself absorbed in the music and in spirit he came near the heart of the Lord whence the music sprang. The music continued till midnight. To them there was no world, no heaven and earth, no ocean, no waves and the murmur, no stars. There is only music as The One Presence! At midnight, Krishna stopped playing the music. Again there was the world, there where the heaven and earth, there was the ocean with its drum beat of waves, there was darkness, there were the stars twinkling and hence there was the sky in darkness. Gradually they came to their senses.

Krishna : "Do you weep, Uddhava ?"

Uddhava : "My being is full with thy holy presence and there is no place for sorrow."

Krishna : "Do you know that all the Yadavas perished ?"

Uddhava : "Yes. It is a dream. Someone told me of it all in a dream. I noticed it in the dream. You are the only one to me who is real."

Krishna : "But you can still see the Yadava ladies and the inhabitants of Dwaraka weeping."

Uddhava : "They dream that they are weeping and they dream their existence. I am awakened from the dream. Mine is a sweet dream. Theirs is a nightmare. This is my lot and that is their lot."

Krishna : "Are you scared by my play of illusion ?"

Uddhava : "I am happy that you are playing your game with me. I take delight to know that you have accepted me as your partner in the play."

Krishna : "You are mad !"

Uddhava : "Everyone is mad in his own way. Are you not mad ? Since you are an expression of the child, you do not notice your madness."

Krishna : "By the way ? why have you come here, searching in the dark. ?"

Uddhava : "I believe you are present. Hence I came. I never searched. Your music came in search of me and drew me here."

Krishna : "Now what is it that you want ?"

Uddhava : "The same thing which you want. One thing remains with me and it is the desire to follow you."

Krishna : "You intend chasing me even if I do not like it ?"

Uddhava : "Your acceptance is mine. Let this night pass like this. When it is dawn once again, I will follow the Path of your will."

Chapter 23

The whole night witnessed Krishna and Uddhava walking amidst the jungles of the seashore. As they gazed across the sea through the bowels of darkness, they got immersed in the music of the breakers that seemed to herald the dawn. Daylight objectified everything. It was as if their silence was breathed out into the many scenes of the world around them. The sun rose behind them and cast his rays before their eyes towards the Western horizon. These scattering rays were like droplets of molten gold and silver sprinkled on the crowns of the moving waves. As the wheel of time rolled on and the crank wheels of time in the shape of hours and minutes rent the old curtain of darkness, heaps of corpses were seen hither and thither on the shores like the torn pieces of darkness. Both of them walked into the sea, had a dip head deep and walked out to the shore. Then they walked into the thick of the jungle with water dripping down their wet garments. The cloudy morning appeared dull and heavy like a mourning face. There was no splendour of redness and the dawn appeared pale and aghast. Stormy winds whirled across them in space and twisted the tender branches of the neem trees in hissing sounds. It drizzled. Peacocks woke up stretching their long necks in producing sounds which were like groans and sobs. As they walked the jungle grew thicker and thicker with closely grown banians, peeples and figs.

Uddhava broke the silence and said : " Those who want to seek you should walk on earth along the path you tread. Those who have some other thing to do are not fit to follow

you. Those who want to follow you should walk in darkness and find you seeking, Can we understand that it is not possible for the householders to follow in your footsteps?"

Krishna : " All the cowherds of Vraja were householders, They sought me in darkness of midnight along the pathways of Brindavan whenever I started my flute music. None of them had the idea that they were seeking me."

Uddhava : " The Rishis who explore the ocean of the Vedic wisdom self-consciously swim through the cycle of births and rebirths. They still believe that they are seeking you. Time and again they fall into the habit of defining their Law, showing righteous indignation towards each other, cursing each other and chanting Mantras of black magic to protect their path in the name of the Law. The unscholarly, illiterate rural cowherds walked with you at ease. Is it not strange that these Rishis are being drifted away from your path by the ever pushing waves of the ocean of their wisdom? "

Krishna : " Why do you talk of wisdom? The plan of the Veda reveals itself when you observe the daily routine of the cowherds. To these Rishis the Veda is in no way more valuable than an authoritative text. "

Uddhava : " Between the Rishis and cowherds, whom can we call Sanyasis and whom can we call the householders?"

Krishna : " No one named the cowherds as Sanyasis. They have renounced all their routine by offering it to me. They offered their life to me and hence they live in me. They enjoy the highest bliss. They have not learnt the word Sanyasa and thus they are saved. These Rishis of whom you speak make themselves busy in defining the term Sanyasa. They construct their own bridge towards their unknown destination and thus fall a prey to the child play of the Habit Angel. "

Uddhava : " Is there no salvation to these self-conditioned beings? Tell me what they have to do if they are to be saved. "

Krishna : " You want to learn the way then administer these beings, I suppose. I will unfold the path before your eyes, no doubt. But remember that you are authorised to impart it only to those who feel the need. Do you remember our first meeting ?

Uddhava : " Yes. It was the time when you left Brindavan and came to Madhura for the first time. Kubja worshipped you with flowers and perfumes and "

Krishna : " You left off everything and came all the way to follow my footsteps. Still you feel delicate to mention certain things to me. You mean to say that Kubja longed for physical union with me ? "

Uddhava : " It is something which I do not understand till to day. "

Krishna : " What was my age at that time ? "

Uddhava : " Twelve years. "

Krishna : " Was it natural for Kubja to conceive the idea of physical union with me ? Of course it was not. For the same reason, she knew herself as Kubja, the dwarf hunch-back. After that you remember that she assured you about her experience with me. I have two vehicles, one the natural and the other one the supernatural. I present the touch of my supernatural vehicle to all those who desire my touch. At the same time, they had the touch of the natural vehicle since their vehicles were natural. The result is that they were freed from their dwarfish nature, while my natural vehicle remained untouched. In all the bodied beings, I exist as the Omnipresence, supernatural. I exist as their physical presence in the form of their bodies. As a living being, I play encaged. As the pervading one, I stand above though I reside within. As such I lived all the years of my life. Anyone who longs for me will contact me, fet it be through lust or through anger or malice or jealousy or covetousness. On my part the contact is the same with all. To each of them, the contact differs according to their nature and culminates finally in the contact of my absolute presence. To

some, this culmination occurs in this life. To others, it cannot occur, until after they leave the present body. The former are those who walked with me on earth. The latter work out the means of their death as events of their lives in anticipation of this union with me.

Now I will explain to you something about the way of life to be followed by the conditioned beings in order to achieve salvation, of which you have asked me. Do you remember the day when I had sent you to Brindavan? You went there and had your first acquaintance with Gopis. You had an eye-opening when you spoke to them. You praised them that the high level of their life experience could not be achieved by those who follow the path of penance, scripture and Yoga. You touched their feet and bowed down to them. They collected lots of butter and made a big lump of it and sent it lovingly to me through you."

Uddhava : "I expressed the doubt that it would melt away on the way. They laughed at it. They assured me that as long as my heart was with you, it would never melt. They warned me that it would melt the moment I thought of the butter and conceived a doubt."

Krishna : "Since there was no other go, you offered your heart to me to the exclusion of any other thing. Hence you could succeed in bringing the butter to Madhura and handing it over to me. If this butter can represent one's life, there is no better path that can be recommended to the householder. Those who offer it to me and live in me know no disappointment. Even scriptures, rituals, study, meditation, penance and the practice of yoga are of no avail to those who lose sight of me and live in themselves as themselves. In the hands of such the butter melts away! For such the knowledge of scriptures and ritual discipline is a burden. If their life is centred in me, the butter won't melt. If their life is centred in them, it melts away."

Uddhava : "It is inevitable that these conditioned beings transgress the Law many a time by the force of their motives,

To them how many lives will it take to neutralise the self-inflicted conditioning?"

Krishna : " It takes as many lives as they want and even more to those who allow their lives to melt. Deeds done to escape from the result of the past deeds multiply motives. Any day they have to stop it and follow the path of offering the butter of their life to me. The spirit of offering awakens them from the nightmare of their self-conditioning. After getting awakened from the nightmare, no fool tries to make an effort to pay off the debts or kill the enemies of his dream. The awakened one knows only to discharge his duty and not to achieve and there is neither motive nor the binding chain of action. Success and failure, happiness and misery condition the one who is in the dream. Past motives exist only in the dream state. Multiplying Karma exists in the dream. None of these things exists to the one who is awakened. Only doing exists to him, for the doing does not belong to him. This is the point where the need for the body, mind and senses comes to an end.

Saying so, Krishna turned back and disappeared into the thickest foliage of the shrubs.

Chapter 24

It was dawn when Krishna slipped off from Uddhava. Perhaps, he wanted to be alone, Uddhava thought. Now Uddhava stood alone in the footways of the jungle. What is it that he should do now? The path of wisdom imparted to him by the Lord now walks with him. It is the only one that keeps him company and the thoughts of Uddhava centred round it. The presence of the Lord touches him in the shape of the message. Still the thoughts of the Lord's physical separation were chasing him like hounds. The form of the Lord stood in his heart as if made of wisdom. Yet he enjoyed the physical presence of the Lord, but only in the form of the anguish of separation. The Lord gave his consent to Uddhava to follow him. Then what is the necessity for him to disappear, longing for loneliness? Elephants and noble beings, as they are, do not like to be noticed by any one, when they leave their bodies. Is it the same with the great-souled human beings also? If such is the case, then there is no possibility for him to witness the physical presence of the Lord once again.

Thinking so, Uddhava took small strides along the paths of the jungle. He walked with his looks cast down to the earth in deep reflection. He could observe the footprints of the Lord in the moist sand. They were marked with the divine symbols of the plough, the banner and the conch. He fell prostrate in ecstatic devotion before the footprints, his head touching the celestial symbols on the trodden path. He bowed down and gazed at them, as tears rolled down his cheeks. His hair stood on end and his body shivered in raptures as he touched the footprints. He took out a handful

of the moist sand from the footprint. He placed it on his head in deep veneration. Yet he lamented that he wiped off the footprints with his own hands. He said :

“The one who wants to follow your footsteps is the one who wipes off your footprints ! Is it not foolish ? I think it is natural to the living creatures. Illusion overtakes us, the creatures, in any form, any moment. Can there be an act of greater illusion than this ? Which way am I to proceed now ? Oh Krishna ! I very much long to see your graceful face once again within my physical eyes. I aspire to have the pleasure of exchanging words with you and walking by your side once again. Can I hope for it ? Now that your Lordship commanded me to stay back, can I hope for your arrival once again ? You left me, my Lord ! without any direction. Still I do not find any other alternative to seeking you. I continue my search for you in the expanse of these jungles, since you made your disappearance here. I will continue my search, as long as my body walks. Whether you grant me your physical presence or not, my search is in itself a success and an accomplishment. This is the search that is made by every creature on earth, in the air and in water. The creatures walk in search of you whether they understand it or not. It is the case with everyone of the Devas, Kinneras, Demi-gods, Demons, Devils and the Serpents and all those who walk and crawl and creep and stand on earth. In the name of his own aspirations, efforts and hopes and expectations, everyone proceeds in search of your presence. Living one's life is nothing but proceeding in search of you. A living being is one who seeks the One in himself. Blessed are the beings who experience life as their constant awareness of you. Blessed are those who infuse the beings around them with their devotion for you. They are the celestial sages like Narada whose names I invoke. I bow down to their feet, so that you may be seen once again. They are the ones who utter your name in their hearts through the day and through the night. They are the ones who show the way to cross the ocean of existence.

They are the ones like Sanaka and Sanandana, whose dust of the feet I wish to have on my head. May those blessed beings shower their grace upon me and bless me to have your darshan once again.

"I may be called mad for longing so even after knowing everything. It may be attachment. But there are many who have such an attachment to your physical form as their path. May be, I am one among them. It may be my ignorance. If, indeed it is real ignorance, let it be granted to me all the same. The ignorance which gives me your physical presence is greater than the knowledge which demands us to understand your absence rightly. We can't say that such ignorance is not there with the sages like Narada. Many a time we have seen them visiting Dwaraka on many a pretext just to have your physical presence. And therefore my Lord, you give your objective presence, the presence of your celestial beauty before my eyes. See that your music quenches the thirst of my ears once again. The Gopis of Brindavan, it is said, have experienced the anguish of your separation and ran hither and thither in search of you. We cannot say that they are all ignorant. They are my Gurus, who have opened my eye of wisdom. I aspire to bow down my head to you, as they did in Brindavan."

Like a mad man, Uddhava walked along the path, talking to himself. As he walked, the sun went down the Western horizon and once again it was night. From a distance, he was convinced that he heard the flute music of the Lord. But it was imperceptible. Like the darkness of the night, it has no beginning and ending, but yet it appears that it has both. Darkness cannot be seen. But it can be seen that there is darkness. So also the music is not perceptible, but it was evident that there was the music. Of course, it may be an illusion based on habit. Even though it is a fact that it is an illusion, there is the flute music in the illusion. He tried to follow the direction from which the music came. But he felt that the music was being heard from within

his heart. If he were to walk along the direction of music, he has to walk straight into his heart!

Throughout the night, the music was being heard and Uddhava continued his quest even in the total darkness. In the days of old, when the whole creation went into dissolution, there was the one thing, the ocean of one existence. The Eternal Sage Markandeya conducted his journey on the background of the Ocean of Eternity and he conducted his search for the Lord, the Eternal Child. Now that the darkness filled everything like the ocean, Uddhava found himself one like Markandeya. Uddhava moved on as the one witness of the whole night. Flute music beckoned to him and while he tried to walk towards the music, night passed into the next dawn. Uddhava entered many a shrub and came out of many a bush in his search.

Something lurked like the twinkle of a star somewhere in the shade of a tree at a distance. Uddhava walked towards it and gazed. A young man of eighteen sat down under a tree, smiling. A beautiful celestial light surrounded him and illumined everything about. The youth was sitting at the base of a tree. He held his right cheek in his right palm as he smiled. His smile permeated the moon beams. In the left hand he held a divine lotus by the stalk. He was clad in a silk lower garment, which glittered like the morning sun as he toyed with the lotus stalk. His ears bore pearl ear-rings and his shapely chest sported a necklace of many a gem stone. He was smiling, rejoicing within himself. His hair hung upon his shoulders, like a host of black beetles gathered. He wore a crown of gold studded with gem stones, which shone like many morning suns. Uddhava approached the youth and prostrated to the lotus feet of the youth as he wept like a boy and washed the celestial feet with his flow of tears.

Then the celestial youth spoke: "Uddhava! Do you recognise me? I am Myself, I am your friend and associate of childhood. It is more than a hundred years since you saw me in this form. You can again be with me as my associate of childhood. Tell me; tell me the stories of those days. Repeat the

sprightly conversations of childhood, It is for your merriment and pleasure I now bless you with the selfsame presence."

Uddhava: "My Lord, only you can repeat the sprightly conversation and jokes of our childhood or recall your divine child's play of miracles. You speak out something and I will listen to you and follow you."

Krishna: "Like you there is one who always longs to listen to my word. He too is awakened out of the dream. He wants to follow me and listen to me. He is Maitreya. There is the third one who is still dreaming. He dreamt that he came out of his dream. He dreamt that he was out of the nightmare. He too seeks me and visits all the centres of pilgrimage in search of me. All his search is being experienced in his dream. He asks me if he can wake up and come to me in time. But the questioning takes place in his dream. Even though I call him or try to answer his question, it cannot reach him."

As the Lord uttered these words, Maitreya appeared before them, from within the coverage of trees.

Krishna: "Friend, Maitreya! how is it that you are here so unexpectedly?"

Maitreya: "There is nothing that you do not know."

Krishna: "Even a known thing needs repetition."

Maitreya: "During the early hours of this morning I dreamt about you, the playful divine in human frame. In my dream, I saw you fabricating many illusive forms of creation. There you have shaped a beautiful city of nine gates. You gathered some beings there and kept them under your protection. There were many houses of magic in the city. A magician was found working out his magic in each house. He brought a good number of skulls and bones. He gathered them into a number of skeletons. The skeletons began talking to each other. In the course of the talk, many sciences were discussed. Many affairs of the world came into the discussion. Some of the skeletons developed intense

curiosity about the content of their discussions. Some of them began to learn the Sastras in all seriousness. Some others got enmeshed in the procedures of the worldly affairs. They were trying to know what is to be done. They were framing right programmes. They were conceiving incidents and brooding over them with fear, despondency and sorrow. Then they began to call the incidents undesirable and unhappy. In their fear they were shuddering and shivering so severely that the skeletons were getting shattered into the skulls and bones, each part of the skeleton breaking off from the rest. You were whispering something to the magician in the houses. Then you made the skeletons gather in a heap and burnt them, one by one. Those who were enmeshed were being liberated and shunted out to the shores of the ocean."

Krishna : "Are you sure that you are awakened now and that you stand before me in reality? Or is it that I should understand that you are also enmeshed in a skeleton and came walking to me in your somnambulism?"

Maitreya : "I am not qualified to assert or affirm anything to you. At the same time I am sure that I came and approached you fully awakened. The very fact that I came in search of you is a direct proof. Had it been otherwise, I would have walked in search of my own skeleton. It would have been a great loss to you since the number of your disciples might have been less by one. Coming to the point, please explain to me who was the magician in my dream?"

Krishna : "He is my favourite disciple. His name is the Angel of Habit. He has been my close disciple, long before you knew me."

Maitreya : "Evidently he is older than we. So he is an old bug of your disciple. You are never tired of your child's play. Enough with it. I am interested in following you and I seek your permission."

Krishna : "Following me! Then what are you going to do with your disciples at Sravasti, Kalapa and Sambala? Your ties with them may not allow you to follow me."

Uddhava : " Ah, me ! Bonds to Maitreya ? If Maitreya is bound by bonds, who, on earth, is free ? "

Krishna : " Why ? There is Maru and there is Devapi, the more worthy disciples of the worthy Guru Maitreya. They have in turn, their more worthy disciple, Djwhalkhul. No fear about bondage. They are ready to cater liberation sumptuously to all those in the world who suffer from bondage. Had Maitreya been free from all bondage, he would have searched for me in the caves of Sravasti itself. He would have followed my footsteps there itself. Where is the need for him to come all the way to the shores of Dwaraka in search of me ? I fear he might have dreamt about me also getting enmeshed in a skeleton. I think it is the reason why he came here in search of my skeleton, "

Maitreya : " I fear it is all due to the influence of your close disciple, the Angel of Habit working upon us. "

Krishna : " My old disciple himself is not free from his fascination for this frame of mine. "

Uddhava : " Say so. It is the reason why you could manage to be his Guru. He may be the Angel of our habit. You are the Angel of his habit ! "

Krishna : " Yes. My habit is the Path of Yoga. Past associations form habits. Habits cause bondage, when one gets enmeshed in one's own skeleton. At the same time, habits are indispensable to get oneself liberated from one's own bondage of self-conditioning. Habit of desiring causes bondage. The habit to follow the Yogic path breaks the meshes and sets one free. Habit is, in either case, a necessity. To come out of the two types of associations, it is necessary to make practice of offering as a habit. In any case habit, the Angel of Practice, is indispensable. Everyone has to resort to him. "

Uddhava : " Why don't you say that he is a necessary evil ? You have found the right place for the wrong thing and that is your oldest disciple. Do you conclude that what we see in you as your splendour is also the result of the magic spell of habit ? "

Krishna : " Whatever you see as my splendour, you see it from what's in your hearts. This form of mine is churned out of your heart and it is not at all the form I now really possess. I exist in any one of the shapes. My being is experienced by others according to their point of view. The one who shapes things is in your hearts and he is your Guru. Remember that one's own Guru exists in oneself as Himself who suggests. I gave you the power to see in me what you are to see. I saved you from the web of what you want to see. These living beings, many of them, mould the patterns of what they want to see. The plurality of their patterns does not permit them to see what they are to see. Some souls can see like you. Some propose the existence of the Nature and the Indweller, the couple that is fabricated out of their sense of inevitability. Some others propose to see the five senses, the five states of matter and the multiplicity of qualities and attributes. They see all this in my splendour which they propose. Then in my name they enjoy my splendours and they are deceived. Still others see my presence as their own relatives, friends and enemies. All these beings live in me along with these forms they propose and finally, they merge in Me along with their proposals and forms. In the end, they lose their existence. They cannot reach My existence. Hence they die. Those who see like you merge in me and exist in me as My patterns, the Archetypes. Again they are objectified from my mind and they come out into existence. They abound my first creation everytime and they are the noble mind-born seers, the Kumaras. They stand as the first batch of Gurus to the beings of my subsequent creation. The Manus, the Seven Rishis, the Four Kumaras, Brahma, the Creator and his son Narada are all such. I bless you also to stand among them. "

Uddhava : " My Lord ! You have enlightened us of these beings. They are the first of your creation. Permit us to know if there is a higher truth underlying these creations, "

Krishna : "Yes, there is. But it is perceived by everyone according to his own meditation. Absorption leads you to the background truth, whereas perception gives you your own concept of the same. What is there is the Truth. That which is perceived is not. When the beings come back to themselves from their absorption, then their experience recollects the truth according to their concept. The concept is seen as truth. Not only that, it becomes truth to them and this is true with everyone. Everyone finds his solution from his truth. What is there is imperceptible, What is seen is the concept. I bless everyone in the form of his own concept. I allow everyone to think and shape for himself in me. Everyone believes, "I perceive." He perceives in me. Thus I perceive in them. This is the kingdom of My Lordship that exists in the beings. To the one who knows, this, nothing remains to be known."

Uddhava : "My Lord! Permit me to know whether you approve of all the traditions and practices of these god-minded ones?"

Krishna : "Devoid of my approval, there is no awakening. No one awakens as "an existence." Then there is no basis for a concept. Then what to speak of tradition and practice? All the traditions and practices emerge from those who awaken in me as "I AM." Thus I am living awakened in all these forms. Everyone creates in Me what he needs. One who creates the need of tradition in me, creates one's own tradition also in me. Same is the case with every kind of practice. Whenever a being creates the need of something for himself, it becomes necessary for him. Vedas, Sastras, Sacrifices, Studies and Austerities have all come into existence like this and they cater in this way. I am the beginning and the end of all. I am the goal of all these created entities."

Uddhava : "My Lord! Permit me to know if the virtues like aptitude for penance, offering, purity and compassion belong to your nature or if they are concepts created by the beings in you."

Krishna : " All these beings take their birth from my own nature, the Nature that exists in Me. There is no existence to anything that is not natural. How can a created being create such a thing of non-existence? Now look here, Forbearance is the trait of this earth, derived from nature. The quality of life-giving is natural to air. Purifying and quenching the thirst are traits derived by water from nature. Bestowing the cycle of metabolism is natural to the clouds. Man knows these qualities and learns them as virtues from nature. He does it out of his own nature. He follows them and gets divinely transformed and then he is liberated."

Uddhava : " My Lord ! Permit me to know if the division of the four classes and their four stages of human span belong to nature or if they are fabricated by man."

Krishna : " You see the many temperaments among the human individuals. The manyness in them is due to the blend of the three Gunas that belong to Nature. The proportion among the three decides the individual nature. Among the human beings, you see the active ones, the creatures of habit and those who live in poise. Among the creatures of habit there are the active ones and the poised ones. The three attributes of nature get multiplied into infinite number of combinations, which give as many temperaments. This individualisation gives each his own nature with his own characteristic qualities. Each one responds to his own type of work and it is called Karma. This gives you a clue to understand people in groups. A broad outline of its application is what you know as the division of people into the four classes. One should know one's aptitude and understand one's place in society. One should understand the works one is suited for. Out of them, if the useful items of work are gathered and grouped, then the division of the four classes takes its shape. This is how the ancients saw it and put it in practice.

" Another aspect is that the human individual undergoes transformation of his nature according to the ages of his span.

If the work is divided according to this perspective, then you will get the division of the four Ashrams and the corresponding duties. Now you can understand that these two types of division take shape from my three-fold nature and that they are not independently fabricated by the human mind."

Uddhava : " My Lord ! Permit me to know if the sense of high and low among the four classes of people is followed according to the purpose served by each of them. "

Krishna : " Purpose never gives you the sense of high or low. Purpose always decides the mode of action that works out the welfare of all. Those, who are not yet mature to take part in this work, belong to the earlier steps of evolution. The Law of Magnetism expresses through them as attraction and repulsion. It works as the seed of the pairs of opposites which manifest as their likes and dislikes. They take these pairs as their guidance and understand values in terms of high and low. Such an understanding creates disturbances in every race and nation. Such an understanding does not permit them to know their work properly. Knowing one's own work purifies the mind and establishes happiness in the State. A fit mind wants to see the State happy and to keep itself pure. The unevolved mind aspires for happiness to itself and purity in others. Such a mind creates unrest and war. The one who lives among such individuals will also be necessitated to create disturbance and conflict. One should save oneself from such a state of mind. The practice of Yoga and discharging duties in a spirit of offering are the two things which save the mind from trouble. Whenever the individual mind loses confidence in the goodness of the spirit of offering, then there is the advent of Kali. "

Uddhava : " When life is purified by the spirit of offering, the living being gets the vision of the one in all. He sees you in everything. You lived with us only to prove this truth. Very few are those who recognise this. Those select few experience the presence of your celestial beauty in all. Thus they cross the ocean of Samsara. To achieve this for

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as many beings as possible on earth the sages strive. It is to this effect that the great ones like Narada used to come to Dwaraka on and off. All other beings who had no idea of your Omnipresence came to you to achieve what they wanted. From the very beginning, you have blessed me with the vision of your super-natural being. But I used to understand your beauty as the one that belonged to your physical body. From age to age, I noticed that your beauty did not wane. Then it was something mysterious to me. All these years I saw your being always eclipsed by the physical sheath. You saw my anguish. You paid attention to my lamentations. Today I am able to see your divine beauty in all its phases."

Krishna: "Now listen to me. I exist in the space around you since it is my body. In that phase I am called Parabrahman, The Highest God without attributes. When I exist in the form of ideas in the hearts, I am known as Jeeva, the living being. As a goal of these ideas and aspirations, I exist and I am called Iswara, the Lord of the Hearts. I exist in the form of the many Devas, who manifest as the senses and the mind and then I am called Chitta, the implement of perception. I exist also as the form of the five states of matter, when I am known as the body. I exist in the shape of the individual nature, when I am known as the Lord of the three Gunas. Above and beyond all these things, I exist as the seed from which the whole creation sprouts. Then I am called Parasakti, Power Unbound. It is what the seers know as my incarnation of the Daughter of the Mount. As the Lord of Pervasion, I am Vishnu. As the imperceptible background, I am Siva. As the Creator of Beings, I am Brahma, the four-faced. All these splendours unfold in Me as my habit under the guidance of my oldest disciple, the Habit Angel. Always he is immersed in my meditation and is enjoying all my forms. Those, who seek me and follow me, will have the presence of all my forms. Hence everyone of my forms keeps company with them and they are never alone, though they are one with me. Those who want

to follow one of my forms according to their nature cannot have my company. They live enmeshed in the desired forms and the names of my forms. They name everyone according to their understanding and they believe that these names are true. Thus they are encaged in the skeletons. They study and worship the physical bodies of the various names, sciences and cults. Since you are following me, you are seeing me as the One Wisdom existing in my physical frame."

Maitreya : "Sometime ago, you explained to me how you required the medium of a blessed soul to permeate and transmit your soul music to the beings at large. You also told me that you blessed my spirit as your medium. Is it not possible to transmit your soul music through your own subtle body ?"

Krishna : "'My own' is something foreign to me and hence it is Maya. I have nothing of my own. The only truth with me is 'I am.' Hence I have no subtle body of my own in order to use it as a medium of transmitting my soul music. According to the work that is to be realized I have to use the subtle body of some one. Both of you have followed me up to the fitness. On the human level, I aspired for the third one and that is Vidura. Parikshit replaced him and he is now ready. He will be the King Emperor of this holy land. I will establish the administrative aspect of the Eternal Wisdom in him. He will lead the Law of the land of Brahma as its very head. Now it is time for the Law in me to be realised as the cycles of the year. Day after tomorrow the Sun God enters the sign of Mesha, when the new year begins. Then he begins to lead the Law as the Head. The coronation of Parikshit takes place during the month of Mesha. At the same time, Maru takes up the responsibility of protecting the Administrative Law. This he does with the help of the Light of Mesha as his crown. He leads Parikshit along the footsteps of Law. Manu begins to work out the kindling of my soul music in all beings with the sign of Simha as his abode. People begin to understand how to excuse and forgive. Thus they are drifted into My Path. Devapi takes up the charge of leading

the beings to the power goddess, the Daughter of the Mount. This he does with the aid of the Light of the sacred sign Dhanus. Then people begin to feel the stir to begin their search. Agastya gets a sudden expansion and becomes a great Adept. He presides over the Light of Kumbha and imparts the concept of the New Age in all the beings. Djwhalkhul presides over Mithuna, the sign of Utterance. He permeates my soul music through many voices in many tongues.

"A very few of the living beings understand that the Sun God is imparting the Light of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, in the form of their own bodies. The three-fold wisdom of the Sun God is ever unfolding into the twelve months of the year. It is to distribute the rays of My Wisdom and fill the beings with my wisdom in full. Even then the beings live in two different categories. Some of them live in me and others live in themselves. Thus the journey of life continues as a search for something unknown and that is the Indweller. Those who live in me offer themselves to me and live to follow the Path of Wisdom. Those who live as themselves will follow the prohibited path. The first category of beings are automatically the followers of the Law of Manu. They live as the forms of Veda. Others are tempted to transgress the Law in their attempt to grow in their abilities and capabilities. They are the children of Daksha, described in the scriptures. It is destined that they are to kill each other and get killed. They cut each other's throat and throw the heads away to the vultures. The creation of Daksha finds no need for the Lord and its life is a sacrifice to one another, since there is the absence of the Lord. Those who follow me and live in me have their bodies protected under the cover of my body. As they shed their bodies they do not die. For them I have My frame which stands as their protection. As the Indweller and the Lord of the Hosts I protect them and I walk with them on earth. Mesha, the first month of the year is the head and Meena the last month is the foot of my body which protects them. To save them, my body finds its end at the tip of my toe. The meditation of my

feet elevates, liberates and protects those who follow me. The sons of Daksha, the materialists, meet their existence in me through meditating my feet. This is the cyclic and the Eternal aspect of my play. It goes on for ever and it is what is known as the Grand Man Sacrifice. There is no higher truth than my existence in all, as all of them. The year of twelve months is verily the Book of Twelve Volumes which contains the stories of my Eternal Wisdom. It is Bhagavata, the story of my body. The secret of Bhagavata lies among the beings who live in me. Those who get at this vision are also called the Bhagavata beings. These enlightened ones are to be known as my forms walking on earth. This is the one austerity they are expected to observe. I will leave this physical body somewhere in the forest and bless you both with my pervasion.

"On the seventh day from today, Dwaraka gets submerged in the ocean. Then it works as the seed of the Dwaraka Principle in the womb of the ocean. It undergoes all the stages of its embryonic development for the externalisation of the City of my Soul Music. I dwell in it and make the presence of my music felt in the hearts of all. Therefrom I breathe Myself out as their breath and I utter Myself as their own utterance through their voices. Each one travels through the darkness of Samsara. He feels my music and approaches me in his search. This is the Wisdom of the Heart and the Heart of Wisdom. Now it exists in the heart of Vedavyasa. He is compiling it as the Book of Twelve Volumes. During the month of Mesha, he compiles the first volume, which serves as the head of the Wisdom. Through the book, he compiles, he imparts the wisdom of the twelve months as my name of twelve syllables. One of you should impart this secret to Vidura also.

"Whenever you think of me, I will be in you in this form of mine. Same is the case with anyone who thinks of me as you do. There is only one form existing. Everyone finds his own specimen of my form whenever he thinks of me. Here ends that which is to be questioned or known,

It is nearing sunset. You take my form stable in your hearts and get along.

"This form of mine does not fit into the human frame. The human frame is being framed out of My Form. It is never the case that the body imbeds form. Always the form imbeds the body. The form of Man is the prototype and it is common to all. It is nothing but the presence of a Rishi called Nara. Ages ago I came down to earth as the Rishi Narayana along with my twin, Nara. We conducted penance through ages and milleniums, for the benefit of the creation. As a result of our penance, I abstracted myself from the stage of a Rishi to that of Narayana, the background of the Highest Absorption. Again I came back to earth as the God in Man. Nara came down to earth as the shape of Man. May your eyes receive this celestial frame once and finally.

"The Lord Unbound, who is the background himself comes down through space as the Sun God. Thus my glory unbound comes down and takes the form of the Sun by virtue of my twin principle Nara and Narayana. Thus it assumes the body of the sun's rays. In the air, it assumes the body of air, In the water it assumes the body of water. Finally it comes down as the earth, when it assumes my earth body. Such a one is there, sitting under the tree which is hundred and twenty-five years old. It will experience liberation tomorrow morning. The earth will be relieved of its burden and breathe out a prolonged sigh of relief. This celestial frame of mine will exist in you and Maitreya by way of recollection, meditation and absorption. It will be with you long. To others it will be with them according to their power of meditation. Now it is time for you to turn back and retrace your steps. Uddhava, my dear ! It is inevitable with you that you suffer from the pain of my separation. But I bless you that no sign of sorrow touches you. The constellation of the Bull rises in the East. The golden scorpion sets in the West. It is the time for me to be with myself. Gather me in your hearts and get along."

As Krishna spoke, Uddhava stood gazing at Krishna, as if drinking the beauty of his celestial frame through his tranquil eyes. The beautiful musk mark on the brow of the Lord reminded Uddhava of the occasion of the Lord's first wedding. The eyes of the Lord sparkle amidst the lines of the decoration of Kajjala. The eyes glanced through the layers of the darkness deep. As the Lord smiled, his nose flapped in grace. Uddhava got the recollection of the celestial bridegroom in that auspicious frame. Uddhava did not turn his eyes away and the lull continued. Krishna smiled and touched the head of Uddhava with his divine flute. Giving the soft tender touch, the Lord turned back gracefully and disappeared into the darkness of the bushes. Unwinking and motionless, Uddhava gazed and gazed until he gazed out through the duration of the night. Sunrise diverted his gaze into the outer world. Uddhava got up from his kneeling posture and walked along the pathway of jungles. He does not know whereto he walks. No one noticed at what juncture Maiteya disappeared.

Krishna relaxed his body on his back on the bare floor in the shade of tree. He placed his head towards the North and his back served as his bed. He folded his right leg and placed it on the knee of the left leg, held high. He began to visualise his Omnipresence within himself. His body is floating upon the atoms of the earth ever active. The water of his blood produced the murmur of its flow in his ears and it is heard as the roar of the sea. His life appeared floating on the surface of the ocean as a coiled serpent. His respiration appeared like a bird travelling in air with the exhalation and inhalation as its wings. He found himself sitting on the back of the brilliant bird Garuda. Thus the journey began.

A hill man was training his grandson in archery at an arrow's distance. He was pointing out the target with his finger and the grandson was shooting the arrows at it. The right toe of Krishna appeared above the leaves of a shrub. It was tossing like the head of a bird. The hill man pointed out in that direction and said: "Now you aim at that little bird,

tossing its head. Hit at the head, so that it may not escape. Then I will know your skill."

The grandson shot forth his arrow. It pierced through the toe, delved deep into the foot and in its speed, it turned up into his ankle. Krishna was absorbed in meditation. He was recollecting the scene of Vali being hit by Srirama from behind the tree. As the arrow pierced through, he opened his eyes with a jerk of pain. In the meanwhile, the grandson of the hill man ran in search of the bird he shot. He saw the foot of the Lord in a pool of blood. The boy got frightened and began to weep. Krishna withdrew his sensations away from the injured foot and said: "You are, in no way, responsible for this. Of course your grandfather knows me and he took revenge on me. He is waiting to invade Dwaraka under the banner of Ekalavya. Even then he worked as the implement of the inevitable. Leave this spot and go away." Saying so Krishna went into himself in meditation. His body tumbled down to one side. Suddenly clouds gathered and there was a short, torrential downpour of rain. The blood from the foot of the Lord got mixed up in rain water and extended in all directions on the earth.

Chapter 25

Daruka, the chariot driver, travelled at great speed and reported all the news of the destruction of the Yadus to the Pandavas at Hastina. Pandavas went into a short duration of stupor by the shock. Then they all lamented and got themselves drowned amidst the breakers of sorrow. A little later, it is sunset and it is night. Arjuna set out that very night. He accompanied Daruka in the chariot and reached Dwaraka a little later than daybreak. The whole city was in pell-mell condition. Hill tribes of various groups walked in big strides of processions and every one of them was ready with his bow and arrow. They hoisted the flag of Ekalavya in many centres. Then they entered the houses and began to plunder.

As they noticed the arrival of Arjuna, they sent urgent messages to their group leaders in the forests. Everyone of the hill men calmly retreated and no one was found in the city premises from that time. Arjuna approached Devaki and Vasudeva. He consoled them. He tried to comfort the ladies of the harem in many ways. He promised that he would go into the jungles and find out the whereabouts of Krishna and Balarama. Vasudeva said that Krishna and Balarama set out into the forests for ever and that they do not prefer to return. However he requested him to meet the two brothers and find out the situation.

As the citizens noticed the arrival of Arjuna, they found themselves composed. All of them gathered near the palace gate and requested Arjuna to save the situation. Along the

three streets, the crowds poured down into the Bharani triangle and every one waited for Arjuna. Arjuna came out to see the meeting place of three great floods of humanity. He talked to them for a while and gathered the chief officers and the big men of the city. He made an announcement.

"My dear and respectable citizens! At the outset please remember that this city is going to be washed into the sea on the sixth day from today. By the word of God, I make this declaration to you and warn you. We have to evacuate the city before the day of deluge. Await my arrival and be ready to start any moment. I am starting now to find out the whereabouts of Krishna and Balarama. Our Lord has placed the responsibility of saving you all upon my shoulders. So too Yudhishtira, the Emperor." After making the announcement, Arjuna retired into the private quarters of the royal palace. He spent the rest of the day in the company of the queens of the harem. Again and again he consoled the ladies bereaved. He tried to engage in sprightly conversations and he tried to divert Revati and the eight queens of Krishna. He said he would go in search of Krishna and Balarama. Then they can all proceed to Hastina and live happily in the care of Yudhishtira. He also promised that the province of Indraprastha would be given to the Yadavas under the rulership of Vajra. Then he said everything would be in order. Late into the night he went on consoling Rukmini and then he retired into the sleeping room of Krishna. There he slept on the bare floor by the side of the foot-stool of Krishna. Throughout the night, he saw Krishna in his dreams. He was walking across the floor, talking and smiling, playing jokes. He was conducting pleasant and skilful conversations with Rukmini. Arjuna's sleep was full of such dreams and he was comforted without his own knowledge.

Early in the morning, two hours before sunrise, he got up and finished his bath and routine. Then he came out and approached the palace of Vasudeva. Sobs, cries and lamentations broke out suddenly from the palace. The

previous night everyone thought that Vasudeva was sleeping. But he got up late in the night, sat in the Lotus posture and went into meditation. Before long, his body was left there and he was no more. Immediately Arjuna made arrangements for his cremation. The four queens of Vasudeva took head bath and decorated themselves in finery and approached the pyre in all veneration. Thus all of them were cremated along with Vasudeva.

Arjuna set out into the forests immediately. Along with Daruka he gathered ten elders of the city and many Brahmin priests. They followed him, all in chariots and left the city. By the time they reached Prabhasa Dwpepa, they saw the heaps of corpses from a distance. Arjuna approached to identify them one by one. They are much disfigured, being pounced by jackals. They erected pyres one by one and placed the corpses as and when they found. Arjuna handed over the cremation of each pyre to a Brahmin and proceeded quickly. He went round the corners of the jungle and searched. He could not find traces of Krishna and Balarama. He walked and walked. He entered many a bush and climbed many a hillock. He made his way through the many bushes and the many covered pathways, where darkness treads during day. He grew insane and lost his sense of time. Night and day he walked and searched. He forgot to notice that he did not bathe, eat or drink through the days and nights. Four long and weary days and nights passed in the search. His ears rang and his eyes went into vertigo. It seemed that his life crept out along his choking gullet. Finally he found a hill man who led him through narrow paths. Under a tree he saw the body of Krishna lying. The arrow that entered his foot was there still. Hitherto Arjuna proceeded stout-hearted to discharge his duties. As he saw the body of Krishna, he could not contain himself. In a spell of sorrow, he fell down to the ground and wept. After a little while, he got himself composed and again began his search. Under the shade of another tree he could recognise the body of Balarama. Then he gathered all the people who accompanied him. They

brought the bodies of Krishna and Balarama to a bright place. Arjuna questioned them. "How many days passed, since we started from Dwaraka?"

Daruka : Today is the fifth day.

Arjuna : Tomorrow is the day of the prophesied deluge. It is said that Dwaraka will be washed into the sea. The Lord expressed so and it is inevitable. If we attempt to bring these two bodies to Dwaraka, then it will be night by the time we reach there. Cremation becomes impossible. About tomorrow no one knows how things will be. If we are to save the inhabitants of the city from the flood, it becomes inevitable that we should finish the cremation of these two bodies now here itself. I find no alternative.

Arjuna took the consent of all and finished the cremation of the two bodies. It is the time of sunset when they started to return.

Daruka said : "Time has the capacity to prevent any one from taking anything including the one nearest to heart. It permits only the drifting of beings and not taking anything out of it."

As Daruka spoke, he broke out into sobs and weeping. Arjuna took him into his arms and wept. The one supported the other and they walked.

Chapter 26

When Arjuna reached Dwaraka along with others, it was midnight. The sky was full of clouds and it was dark. Cloudy breezes were blowing in darkness giving their corpse-like touch to the people who walked. Winds whirled with hissing and whistling sounds catching everyone who walked. Arjuna grew desperate and refused to think. He started doing the needful at every step. He went round with his attendants and alerted the citizens. The ministers, the administrative officers and the notaries of the city were asked to gather. As they walked in darkness, the stormy winds began to pull away the garments off their bodies. Holding everything tight around them, they walked in tottering gait and gathered at the Bharani triangle. It was announced in all the centres simultaneously that all should make an exit at least during the early hours before sunrise. If this was delayed, it might prove disastrous. The people were ready to come out and follow. Since the previous day, they were alert and gradually they grew nervous. Since the time of sunset, they waited, paying particular attention to the modulations of the sea roar. At the call of Arjuna, they came out and gathered at the Bharani triangle, within minutes and seconds. People poured in like the waves of the ocean amidst the city. Around the city, there was the Western ocean roaring in darkness and increasing in speed. The sky above appeared like another big ocean with roaring thunders and piercing lightnings. The whole scene was as if disaster conducted its gruesome dance. As Arjuna hurried the inhabitants of the palaces to vacate, Rukmini, Satyabhama

and Revati stood face to face and questioned Arjuna about the news of Krishna and Balarama. Arjuna stood undisturbed. He wore his crown and shield and shaft and held the bow and arrows. He answered them as he rushed out into the crowd: "All will meet in Hastina. Start and set out."

As the citizens saw Arjuna with his bow and arrows and armour amidst them at the Bharani triangle, they felt courageous. All people followed Arjuna in a grand march. Humanity moved along the three streets as three great rivers flowing. Leading the three directioned flow of humanity, Arjuna walked before them like Bhagiratha. By the time they started, they witnessed the clouds in the sky rolling round in huge masses and the thunders were heard like big explosions in the sky. The array of clouds appeared like a big city suspended in darkness. Lightnings flashed like the many illuminations of the city. As lightnings pierced through the eyes and thunders reverberated through the ears, the whole of the population came out of the city. About twenty minutes before sunrise, the city was evacuated. Arjuna led the procession east-ward via Kusasthali. Along the hill track they climbed towards the summit of the hill. By the time of sunrise, they covered a safe distance up the hill. There was some glare of daylight and sun was not to be seen amidst the thick clouds. From a distance, the city was being observed at a glance. There it was with the buildings, towers, gateways and walls. Fiery lightnings shot down from the clouds towards the city like meteors. In a split second the lightnings revealed the detail of the whole city when the onlookers spotted their own houses. The whole scene was as if enchanted by a magician into appearance and disappearance with all the splendour of lightning and thunder. As the citizens saw the vacant city and their own places in it, they were stunned with fear and surprise. Their hearts ached to see their own properties left to the wrath of sea.

As they reached the summit of the hill, they found the waves growing bigger and bigger as they approached from the distant depths of the ocean. Breakers soared higher and higher until they reached the height of the buildings and towers of the

city. The receding waves clashed with the emerging waves at great speed and they broke out into the skies. The whole thing covered as a thick layer of spray and fog. The clouds began to shower. Through the rain and fog, the city of Dwaraka appeared as seen through an iridescent screen. Suddenly, redness darted across the surface of the sea. A big red fire flamed out within a split second. Everything appeared red, the sea, the waves and the city. The whole plan of Dwaraka gave the appearance of a toy city in red clay. A big depression formed along the flame and the sea was split into two. The whole expanse of water towards the shore, before the fire, rose up as one big wave of unimaginable size. A big mountain of water left the shore into the sky and touched the clouds. As it returned, it lodged upon the whole expanse of the city. The sound produced by the volume of water touching the ground echoed in all directions. All stood stunned in a semi-conscious daze. The ground under their feet quivered. The ocean receded, washing off everything on the way. The crevice of the Gopuccha plateau gave way and separated like a cake cut. The island city appeared floating and dancing amidst the waves for a few seconds. The whole thing was slanted and inverted and disappeared head down.

Chapter 27

Someone wanted to leave his native land and settle somewhere else. He was travelling with his wife and children and grandchildren and all his belongings. He was carrying with him his assets and lifelong earnings. He took a boat to cross a river along with his belongings. The boat toppled in middle waters. He came out swimming. Everyone and everything was lost in the river. He came to the other shore single and cast his glance across the flow of the river. What would be his state of mind? Similar was the state of the mind of Arjuna, as he glanced towards the expanse of space, where Dwaraka existed a few moments before. The city of Dwaraka and its career is truly a wondrous creation of the Lord! Krishna had made a big boat in the name of the city and anchored it in the Western shore. He made it stand across a century. He made it his own city of nine gates. From there he had composed the grand drama of the story of Man. He fixed the duration of the drama as a unit of ten thousand years into the future. He decorated the stage of the drama and finished the stage arrangements. The drama began with the Mahabharata war as the prologue poem of eighteen lines. The next item is the total destruction of the Yadus, which served as the prologue conversation between Time and Human values as the stage director and his friend. The opening scene of the drama is really gruesome and grotesque. Then it is bound to have a better culmination, since nothing can be worse. As the seeds of the future auspicious scenes, one finds them dispersed in the present scene of the drama itself. Naimisa, Krishna Dwipa, Badarikashram, Kalapa,

Sambala and Agastyashram formed the incidents of the first scene. It is certain that they bear the seeds of the future story that is bound to be auspicious. The drama commenced at a high speed and the keynote of the whole play seems to be the relieving of the burden of this earth. The story of Brahmavarta forms the main content and it runs into the future through thousands of years. The trend of events enter into a crisis and then into a dissolution. Who knows how and when the benediction of the culmination shapes. Now, at this juncture, Arjuna found his place in the drama. He played the role of the saviour of all the living beings of the city. It is really a rehearsal that included terse training. What for all this? What is the object of his training? It is an experience which was never before to him. For a man who has seen life as the experience of a century and a quarter, an experience of this type, unknown hitherto, is something which cannot be contained or digested.

Arjuna could not withstand the speed of his conflicting thoughts. With vacant looks, he turned back again and again, to see the void of Dwaraka. As he turned his back, he was in doubt again if the city still existed. It is the nature of the mind sometimes that it is not willing to believe the truth, even it knows it face to face. It wants to believe the desirable and disbelieve something untoward. As he covered the way through the hilly jungles after a while he was again in doubt, if the bodies he had cremated belonged to Krishna and Balarama at all. He laughed at himself in silence amidst the unbearable breakers of sorrow.

Rukmini, Satya and Revati sat in Arjuna's chariot with heads bent and faces hid. Whenever Arjuna looked at their Sindoor brow marks, his heart ached as if pierced by needles and nails. He was not able to withstand the outburst of sorrow. On the pretext of driving the chariot, he sat at the fore. He hid his face as he drove his chariot and wiped his tears unnoticed. The chariot was proceeding slowly. Ahead of it, another chariot carried Jambavati and other queens of Krishna. Subhangi, the daughter of Rukmi and

wife of Pradyumna also was there. Some more chariots were proceeding before that and they carried the families of Samba and other princes. Behind the chariot of Arjuna, the other chariots carried the remaining Yadava ladies and the families of the ministers and then the families of the big men of Dwaraka. They were followed by the chariots containing Brahmin and Kshatriya families. They were followed by bullock carts carrying the families of Vaisyas. Behind them, there were closed, locked carts carrying the wealth of the Vaisyas and the Kshatriyas. They included jewellery, gold, silver, gem stones, silks and other valuables. Either side of these carts, armed forces followed in chariots, on horse backs, elephants, camels and also by foot. Behind these closed carts, there was the array of carts containing the goldsmiths, blacksmiths, weavers, washers, barbers and cobblers. Behind these carts, there were the herds of cows, bulls, buffaloes, donkeys, dogs and other animals. Behind them, there were carts containing perforated baskets full of the hen and the cock and the fowl and the duck. Behind these carts, again there were armed forces guarding.

There was no sun glare and the climate was dull. Clouds drizzled as they were getting thinner and dispersed gradually. No one could imagine that it was noon. The children in the carts complained that they were hungry and demanded a lunch. There was a request that the procession should stop somewhere under the trees. Daruka warned them that it was not possible, since the time was not sufficient to reach a safe place. According to him the procession was passing through a dangerous zone, full of highway men, who would plunder and kill the wayfarers. He advised lunch to be conducted in the carts itself while going.

The procession advanced, via., Vraja and Brindavan. It followed the highway near Madhura and entered the zone of Kuru Jangala. It was about 3 p. m. They reached a spot called the Western Panchavati, on the banks of Yamuna. The procession stopped under the shade of the five big banian trees. Arjuna announced that all the people could get down

and relax for a while. Those who wanted to take bath could have it in the Yamuna. All the people got down and dispersed in all directions. They were freely relaxing and some of them taking a walk. The eight queens of Krishna, Revati and the other noble ladies of the harem who occupied the chariots in front of Arjuna did not prefer to get down. In their sorrow they did not like to face the public. Hence they sat in the chariots with faces down. Arjuna got down and stood talking to Daruka near those chariots.

The banian trees were the comfortable and convenient harbours of hill men who waited with their weapons to loot the wayfarers. Many of them hid themselves in the depths of the banian branches. They observed the dismantling of the procession. They wore skin skirts. A group of them silently crawled down the branches of the banian tree holding daggers tight between their teeth. Within a few seconds they jumped down and covered the whole procession simultaneously like a net thrown over them. Arjuna and Daruka were the two people who noticed the looters descending. Instantaneously they held their bows and darted arrows in high speed on all directions. Half of the people who descended down the branches were shot. With a jerk they fell down and died. But what about the remaining? In the meanwhile another group of hill men who remained above on the trees darted down arrows upon the travellers. The crowds got frightened and ran in all directions. Some of them carried on their heads, their boxes containing the valuables. Suddenly stones were flung round from all directions. Another group of the looters surrounded the camp throwing stones from all directions. People received blows and many of them were injured.

Daruka made no preparations in the chariot for defence. The arrows with him were exhausted. Arjuna began to shoot arrows at a high speed. He stood courageous, but suddenly he found his quivers empty of arrows. Hitherto, he could protect the people in the chariot from being injured.

Now his quivers were empty. In fact they were celestial quivers and could never be emptied even in big wars. Now he found them empty ! Is it believable ? Why not ? In the light of the unbelievably gloomy incidents that occurred hitherto, how could anything be unbelievable ? Arjuna and Daruka received stone injuries. Then Arjuna thought of his mystic weapons in his mind. The mind was pensive and vacant. He was able to recollect the Mantras that invoke the weapons. It stopped there. The Devas of the weapons could not be galvanized, since Arjuna lacked in enthusiasm and spirit. Now he glanced at the state of the travellers. The looters were carrying away the gold, silver and gem stones, finery and the cattle and the fowl and hen. Some of them carried the ladies by force and the ladies screamed and wept. Some of the looters guarded the robbery with their bows and arrows. In a flash Arjuna and Daruka got up into their chariots, they made a sign to the chariot drivers before them. The chariots suddenly started and ran in great speed. Some of the looters who stood on the way fell down and got trampled by the steeds and the wheels. For a long while the chariots ran and ran in high speed and stopped near a small town. The eight queens of Krishna, Revati and the ladies belonging to their children, along with the families of Akrura, Satyaki and Kritavarma were the only persons that were saved. Besides there were a very few. About the rest who were left back, no one knows their fate.

Chapter 28

Along with the ladies in the chariots who were saved from the looters, Arjuna stayed in the village that night. Next day before sunrise, the procession started again. As they crossed the Province of Abhira, it was 7 a. m. By 8-30 they crossed the Province of Matsya. As they entered the Surasena Province, it was about 2-30 pm. There they alighted near a big lake. They had a wash and quenched their thirst. Again they started. They entered the city of Madhura and reached the transport centre with horse stables by about 4-30. Then they changed the chariots and horses and refreshed themselves by the arrangements made by the subjects of Yudhishtira. They again started and entered the borders of Panchala before sunset. That night they took rest in Panchala and enjoyed the hospitality of the ruler, the grandson of Dhristadyumna. Next day again they started before sunrise and reached the plains of Kurukshetra before 7-30 a. m. It was the place where the Mahabharata war took place. Towards the north-east of the plains, there was the city of Kurukshetra, with huge walls and gigantic gates. Arjuna led them all into the city.

The chariots passed through many gates and stopped at the rest-houses of the royal palaces. Servants and maids carried the articles from the chariots into the rest-houses. The people in the chariots went into the rest-houses and began to relax. By the orders of Arjuna, it was announced that they were going to stay there for three days, on an urgent work of the administrative nature. Ladies, children and old people were distributed into different buildings, with

everything arranged comfortably. They finished their wash and refreshment and relaxed. In the meanwhile, Arjuna sent messages to all the appointed ministers, officers, purohita, subjects and the jury on an emergency mission. By the next morning, everyone was present. A session of administrative procedure was conducted in the royal hall of Kurukshetra.

Indraprastha was the capital for the state that was separated by Dhritarashtra by way of partition of the empire. Then Dhritarashtra made Yudhishtira the ruler of the State Indraprastha. Now Arjuna made arrangements to divide the province and form three sub-states to be allotted to the three legal heirs of Yadu, Vrishni and Bhoja clans. It was understood that Yudhishtira planned the whole thing and ordered Arjuna to execute. Rukmini, Satya and Revati could understand the whole situation by enquiring all the news from the attendants. They were shocked to see the tidings of events for no apparent reason. Then they could smell something about the demise of Krishna and Balarama. They wanted to find out from Arjuna what it was directly, but Arjuna avoided their presence, since he got immersed in the assembly arrangements.

The sessions took place after day-break. In the presence of the ladies of the Yadu, Vrishni and Bhoja clans, Arjuna took decisions. Satyaki's son, who represented the Vrishni clan was made the ruler of the area around the city of Saraswati. Another area with Mritikavara city as the capital was brought under the rule of Kritavarma's son, a Bhoja descendant. The remaining province with Indraprastha as capital was given to Vajra, the son of Aniruddha, grandson of Pradyumna, the great grandson of Krishna, who was the legal heir of the Yadus. All the chariots, horses, elephants, palaces, money, gold and the armies, body-guards, attendants and servants were properly distributed among the three. The ladies grew impatient and wanted to know about the existence of Krishna and Balarama. They waited for Arjuna throughout the day. Arjuna was busy and he could not be

seen on the second day also. That night, Arjuna made sure that all people finished their supper and made a visit to the resting place of the ladies. He stood before them and spoke to them with all humility and obedience.

“That day I started from Dwaraka and searched for all the bodies of the dead heroes. I could identify one by one and got them duly cremated with the help of the holy Brahmins. It was not possible for me that day to find out the whereabouts of Krishna and Balarama. I went round the foot ways and the rugged paths of the hills and jungles like a mad man in search of them. Day and night I walked and walked until my head reeled. At last I could get the guidance of a hill man who led me direct to the place where Krishna was. There under a tree, I found his body lying. His foot was injured by an arrow. Again I searched and succeeded in finding out the body of Balarama under another tree. I went into sorrow for a pause and again came to senses. Then I questioned my followers as to how many days passed after we had left Dwaraka. Daruka indicated that we spent five days in our search. Then it came to my mind that Dwaraka was going to be washed away the next day. I was at a loss to understand what to do. Had I attempted to bring the bodies of Krishna and Balarama back to Dwaraka, there was no time to cremate and next day would give us no time to do anything. If I hesitated in that situation, it cost the life of the whole city. Daruka and Vasudeva transmitted the orders of My Lord to me that I should save the citizens of Dwaraka by taking them away. It was the last and final of the orders I received from My Lord. Then we were left with no alternative, except cremating the bodies of these noble ones then and there. I took decision according to my understanding and completed it. I know that I failed in my duty of bringing the bodies to you. I know that I am cruel and my decision inhuman. Right or wrong, I leave the matter to you now.”

On hearing the news some of the ladies fainted. Some burst into weeping fits. After a little pause, they understood everything and took pity upon the helpless state of Arjuna. They said: "My brother! You are in no way guilty. Who can find fault with you under these circumstances? When time is running as a high tide, who is there to swim against it? The two great ones, who could save all the beings on earth from fear, have wilfully drifted with the tide and you and I cannot decide or judge. We are not able to understand how you could stand like a tower of iron and conduct the whole show with a heart of steel. You are the one noble soul who saved the men, women, children and the cattle and the fowl and the hen of Dwaraka. It is a great sin of ingratitude, if anyone finds fault with you."

Rukmini: "Having accomplished all these, you stand before us as our last hope. I pray you fulfil my wish. I have no life to live before me, without the presence of our Lord. I wish to enter into the flames of fire and reach my Lord tomorrow morning. I only wish that you should arrange for my pyre.

The next morning, Arjuna sent for the holy Brahmins and arranged the fire of atonement with sandal-wood and camphor to those who wanted. Revati, Rukmini and Jambavati entered their pyres. Satya took to penance and went into the forests with sack cloth and holy attire. There she went into meditation and kindled the fire within her own consciousness. She got her body burnt to ashes thereby. In sorrow, dejection and broken mind, Arjuna spent the rest of the day. That night he slept disturbed and it was a series of dreams with fantastically unconnected impressions of events. Rukmini, Satya, Jambavati, Revati and other queens walked in colourful apparels along the flowery pathways of the royal palaces of Dwaraka. They talked, walked, joked, smiled, prattled and laughed. Then there was a disturbance and Arjuna found it was a dream.

Again the sea roared, the clouds covered Dwaraka in showers of thunder-bolts and lightnings. Sea eroded and

gulped the city. Arjuna found himself a female running across the street of Dwaraka in panic, crying out "Krishna ! Krishna ! Save these helpless ones." Then appeared Krishna with a figure that touched the heaven and the earth. He lifted the Govardhana mountain on his little finger and saved the beings from water. Then he danced over the heads of the breakers in the roaring sea. The waves shaped themselves into the hoods of the great serpent Kaliya and bowed down. Then there was disturbance. Arjuna found everything but a dream.

Again there was a nap. The devil of death appeared dancing in the sky over the towers of Dwaraka. She stood naked with all the clouds as her hanging hair. She cast down her looks at the city and the looks descended as the fiery flashes of lightning. With open mouth wide and tongue stretched out, she roared. The child of Krishna appeared and exclaimed, "Putana ! Putana !" He laughed and gave a death blow to the devil in the chest. Again Arjuna came to consciousness to find it all a dream.

He spent the remaining night sleepless. His mind was being chased by disturbing thoughts every second. The next morning he set out on his journey to Hastina quite early. The chariot was running at a high speed. When it reached the spot where the highway branched into two, something flashed in his mind. He diverted the chariot into the other route. The steeds trotted and galloped in maddening speed, until they reached the Himalayan hill tracks. As far as the steeds could pull, he travelled by the chariot. Then he stopped and got down. He took the hill track by foot and walked aimlessly. He crossed many hills and valleys. At a certain spot, he saw a young lady of eighteen. She wore a trident in her left hand, while the right hand carried a Kamandalu and a wreath of Beeds. She was clad in tiger skin. Suddenly she stood before him and said : "You go up this hill. You will find a Bamboo jungle and the vast expanses of Tulasi behind. You go still further and

you will reach Badarikasbram. There is the hermitage of the great sage Suta. You wait there and you can have the Darshan of Vedavyasa. May peace come to you!" Saying so she turned back and walked into the curved hilly paths and disappeared. Wondering at the scene, Arjuna proceeded as directed and had the Darshan of Vedavyasa.

Vyasa : "I know everything. Time is always something novel to the created beings. Its speed is imperceptible, unthinkable and unbearable. Everything comes out in time. So everything belongs to time. Time can never be claimed by the created beings. Things and incidents form part of time and the parts cannot contain the whole. The moment you begin to own anything of time's property, sorrow becomes inevitable. The wonder pictures of Time are to be enjoyed as the sequence of a show. Each sequence is to be enjoyed, as it comes out and before it fades away. No one is expected to make any surmises about the existence before and beyond Time. Time shows you the duties and you are expected to discharge them in time. There is no truth beyond this. When one discharges the duties that means one exists. If one waits that means one is no more. If you imagine something in your own way, it becomes your own way and gets imprinted as your own nature."

Arjuna : "My Lord saved me and saved us. He saved all those who took refuge in him. He established the Law and protected it. For us he has toiled and he spent much time. I could not save his ladies and citizens from the thieves. I lived in vain. My life is a void."

Vyasa : "Neither in vain is your life nor you are a void. The Lord has toiled much and spent his time, no doubt. But he had done it not for you, but for the cause of the Law which saves living beings."

Arjuna : "As I struggled with the looters who were low in valour and heroism, I lost the fight. My quivers were emptied. There was a day when I fought Lord Siva face to

face and demanded the grand celestial weapons from him. I found these things not coming to my rescue against the looters."

Vyasa : " It is true that you fought the Lord Siva face to face. About the grand celestial weapons, it is not a fact that you demanded them from him. The Law of Ultimate justice favoured you in the shape of these weapons. Remember that everyone on this earth is born to do something as his lot. After it has been achieved, there is nothing one can achieve. It is the choice of luck that you lived with the Lord for a good length of time. His smiling face is the one thing that is familiar to you. Establish it in your heart. Do not think of any other thing. If any other thing comes to your mind, meditate it as the smiling face of the Lord. Then your mind becomes one to the exclusion of any other thing. Wait for the shape of things to come. No doubt, your love for the Lord is great. At the same time, remember that the love of your brother Yudhishtira for the Lord is in no way inferior. Same is the case with Bhima, Nakula, Sahadeva and Panchali. Go straight to join them. It is your duty to be with them. You all came down to earth and are grouped as one. It is for you to walk your life as one. This is my message to all. Convey it to all with my blessings. May you have a journey in peace."

With a tranquil heart, Arjuna turned back and left for Hastina. The utterances of Vedavyasa appeared deep and mystic. Arjuna found the statements simple, but the import imperceptible. To his mind it all appeared like a passage written on the still surface of water. These are the words which were oft repeated by Krishna to Arjuna. Even then he found the language imperceptible, as if written on the surface of the waters of time. Again and again Arjuna tried to recapitulate the import of Vyasa's utterances, as he travelled towards Hastina.

Chapter 29

Yudhishtira came to know the proceedings of Indraprastha through the officers who had come to Hastina before Arjuna arrived. The whole of the royal family lived in sorrow and bereavement and Arjuna's arrival comforted them with a sigh of relief. Still the family of the emperor could not come out of the spell of sorrow for three more days and nights. On the fourth day Parikshit approached his grandfathers and Draupadi in the morning. He made them sit in comfort, consoled them and said :

" It is not proper for you to succumb to this unhappy mood for long. You are all under the impression that the Lord is dead. The very idea is an illusion and is atheistic in its nature. To deny the existence of the one who exists is what is known as atheism. Since it could find a place in our royal palace, it also found a place among the people of the city. Some philosophers of atheism go round the city now-a-days, preaching their doctrine. Yesterday I went round the city in disguise. Near the elephant-head gate, I saw an agnostic gathering some youths and delivering a speech. He said : " We hear slogans everywhere that Krishna is God. Then he is dead. Now where is Krishna ? He himself preached that there was no God beyond himself, that he was Eternal and that he had no beginning and ending. He claimed that he lived as the Supreme Godhead, beyond birth and death. Many times he gave his preachings like this. Vyasa compiled his preachings in the name of Bhagavadgita. If he is the one beyond life and death, how is it that he is dead ? This is

what I question. I too can claim Godhood provided I can gather fools who believe. Then what is the reason to believe that Krishna is god and I am not? Beware of such philosophies. Let such ideology not cloud your minds. Awake and grow aware! Thus he went on lecturing."

Sahadeva : "Why didn't you kick his head with your left foot?"

Parikshit : "That in no way prevents Atheism. In fact such a report makes the voice louder. I approached him straight. I looked direct into his eyes and asked him to preach me. I saw the looks of our Lord through his eye. Immediately he sank meek and submissive. He touched my feet. I am not able to understand the reason for his change. Still it appears something strange to me."

Yudhishtira : "In your eyes, he might have seen the Lord in young and long lived looks."

Parikshit : "On the occasion of my birthday, the Lord blessed me with a boon that others see his countenance through my face, whenever I thought of him. I forgot about it and you now made me recollect. As long as His Grace showers through us, it is not difficult for us to integrate the whole nation of Bharat into one grand unit of Light. If you permit me, I will go round the whole land of Bharat by foot from the Sethu to the Himalayas in a clock-wise direction. I will establish the Law as the form of the Lord among the hearts of the inhabitants. After achieving this, I will come to you to have your Darshan again. It is better if we do not lose time. Of course I do not fear that things become impossible after a certain time. At the same time the duration of suffering due to lack of integrity will be longer, when we delay."

Bhima : "My boy! You are our hope and you are our future. A long time ago we could recognise it. It is imperative that you should go round the land of Bharat once and return safely."

Arjuna : "Wherever your feet touch the land, it germinates wealth and becomes fertile. I too wish you should go round."

Nakula : "By the order of our emperor, the Law walks on earth fulfilled, four-fold. I too bless you to take the journey."

Draupadi : "My beloved child ! You are once again the cowherd boy to me. I continue to see the gestures and the merriments of Krishna, the cowherd, in your utterances and smiles. As your feet touch this holy land, it begins to serve as the one cow. Dharma begins to till the land for Law as the one Bull. May you have a holy journey and a happy return."

Parikshit : "Now I await the orders of my grandfather, the King Emperor, who is the Son of the Law."

Yudhishtira : "My boy, the Darling of the Law ! It is imperative that I bless you to go round the land. Still there is one month time before I bless you and permit you. Before that we have to see you as our King, the Emperor. The days of our work are filled. Our span has come to its culmination. It is not wise to ignore this. We have to install you as the Emperor of this integrated land of the Vedas and hand over the goal of our life to you. Then I have a desire which you should fulfil. After this you can honour this land by giving it the touch of your feet all over."

Parikshit : "There is no better accomplishment of my life than to fulfil your wish. Order me."

Yudhishtira : "I will express my wish after I complete your coronation. Tomorrow I will invite the ministers, the subjects and the purohita headed by Dharmya. In the session I will propose this and have the auspicious hour fixed."

Draupadi : "All of us are awaiting this auspicious hour for a long time."

Chapter 30

Millions of stars twinkle as the pores on the body of Space-Man. Each of them is a solar system of its own magnitude and they all serve as spores of creation. The Rishis could locate a part of the starry vault replete with the creation which externalises the Divinity of Narayana. This portion of the starry vault, they called Vaikunta. They located in it the assemblage of the constellations of Sesha, the Serpent of Eternity, Garuda, the Bird which carries the Lord, Brahma, the Lotus-Seated, and the Four Kumaras. Besides they found the stars called Prajapatis and the Seven Seers. All these stars live as spirits and walk along the Path of Heavens to uphold the Law of Vaikunta. The intra-stellar space that imbibes these stars is understood as the frame of Narayana. The living beings that inhabit the planets of those solar systems are much more evolved than those of ours. They need no physical frames and they live as Lights. For this reason, they are called Vedas and the Eternal Lights. They are the perfect Masters of Wisdom and their glance reaches our solar system as their blessing. Then it is distributed among our planets and reaches our earth. All this is visualised by the great sages Sakti, Parasara, Vyasa and their followers. They could also visualise the days when the Pole Star ruled over the summits of the Himalayas. That means, that in the past ages the Himalayas served as the North pole, which the whole system of the galaxies seemed to revolve as the potter's wheel. A group of unit consciousness came down from this wheel in the form of another wheel of illumination. The beings of this second wheel induce

wisdom of right knowledge to the beings of our earth. They imparted the science of relationships between knowledge and action. Thus they revealed the Veda to the beings of this earth. This second wheel is named as Sweta Dweepa. The Rishis of our earth are at first those who came down from this second wheel. Through the Path of Light, they came down as the seven flames of the Sacred Fire. They gave birth to the Seven Breaths of our Universe and they took the shape of the Seven Maruts. Then there was the birth of the fluids. They again came down as the modulations of the seven oceans. Then there was the birth of the Seven Metres as measures of everything. The music of the Seven Spheres was shaped as the various Samas. With all these manifestations, these beings of the White Island came down to earth or the physical matter.

Below this second wheel, these Rishis demarcated a circular piece of land, which included the Himalayas. Over the heads of those who reside this bit of land, these Rishis have created a third rotating wheel, the wheel of their constant awareness. They called this wheel Naimisha and the land under it also they called Forest Naimisha. They saw that the activity of their awareness worked out this synthesis and analysis of the Vedas and Puranas here. As people live under the limitations of the ignorance and they experience self-inflicted sufferings, they are blessed with thoughts of guidance transmitted from the composite awareness of Naimisha throughout the globe. These thoughts give a repeated touch of induction, which they call the Law. Ruling forces come down to earth through the Sun and the Moon and take the bodies of the rulers of the solar and the lunar descent. As they rule the beings of this land, these Rishis from Naimisha transmit Light of Sweta Dwipa to the beings of the earth. Now and then they conduct the ceremonies of path-clearing on the higher planes. For this they conduct gathering of Rishis during certain period of the year. This has become customary from past ages.

In accordance with this custom, Vyasa, Suta, Saunaka, Maitreya, Maru and Devapi gathered at Badarikashram. From there they observed the Lord leaving the physical body of Krishna. They also observed Yudhishtira planning for the coronation of Parikshit. They saw that the light which left Krishna's body travelled to Sweta Dwipa and descended to the Naimisharanya. Then they received their plan for immediate future. They all talked of it and took decisions. Duties have been allotted to some. Maitreya has to make an abode at Prayaga, where the three holy rivers meet. There he has to wait for Vidura's return and then he has to impart the collection of secrets of Bhagavata to him. Maru is to make invisible abode in Sambala and Kalapa. He should be the ruler of the spiritual administrative Law of this earth and take charge of the guidance of the rulers of this earth across the Kali age. He has to begin his duty by transmitting guidance to Parikshit. Devapi took charge of the Minister-Priest of Maru. He has to keep the Eternal Wisdom alive through the Kali age and to sustain it by recruiting initiates. Djwalkhul took charge of Siddhashram. He is to transmit the Eternal Wisdom and its applied sciences to those who live outside this land. As the assemblage ended, Yudhishtira finished his discussion in the sessions at Hastina and fixed up the date of Parikshit's coronation. The date is fixed as the eleventh lunar day of the bright half of Vaisakha lunar month.

Maitreya made a hermitage near Prayaga on the banks of Ganga. With his creative mind he awaited Vidura's return. Vidura made many a pilgrimage and covered many a hermitage after he left the Ashram of Suta. He walked and walked without any destination and suddenly he found himself in the jungles of the proximity of Dwaraka. Since three years, he craved to take a dip in Prabhasa, visit Dwaraka and have the Darshan of the Lord. Whenever he thought of Krishna, he had a recollection of the last scene of the situation. Vidura saw him last, when the Lord came to the royal assembly of the blind king. Then the Lord appeared

as the arbitrator of the Pandavas. He induced Vidura to inculcate justice to the sons of the blind king. As Vidura tried to do it, he was cruelly insulted by Duryodhana and the blind king tolerated it with cold indifference. Now during these three recent years of pilgrimage, whenever Vidura remembered Krishna, he also saw the face of the blind king. It is because the filth of spite did not leave the mind of Vidura. Vidura worshipped the Lord since childhood and yet his mind was not free from limitation. Suddenly it came as a flash to his mind that this is the main cause of hindrance during these three years. He burst into unbearable anguish and tears. He lifted his hands into air and cried out in repentance: "My Lord! Can't you awaken me from the nightmare of my sin? Can't you remove the veil of my ignorance?"

Suddenly he saw Uddhava at a short distance. He was much changed and was not easily recognisable. His hair and beard have grown bushy. As he was taking a dip in each holy river and pond and going about with wet skin dried in breeze and sunlight, his body appeared hard like the bark of an old tree. A golden yellow glow like the light of the rising sun is radiating from his body. In one leap, Vidura approached Uddhava and embraced him tight. Unable to control his feelings, he cried out and wept. Uddhava smiled. The smile controlled the oceanic tide of emotion and transformed Vidura's mind into a still lake of sweet water. Vidura requested Uddhava to take him to Dwaraka and make the darshan of the Lord possible.

Uddhava: "Henceforth Lord Krishna and Dwaraka stand beyond time. Now they can be discovered only in the hearts of the devotees."

Vidura: "I am kept in suspense. Make it clear."

Uddhava: "Dwaraka is submerged in the ocean. Vasudeva granted me and Maitreya, his last darshan. It was a few hours before he left his body. Really the experience was

divine to the core! The shape we saw had nothing to do with his physical body. He talked to us, as a young man, brimming with youth. He imparted his final message as his own breath, which now lives in us, as our breath. At that instant he recollected you and mentioned your name. He asked one of us to impart to you the experience of Bhagavata, which he imparted to us. I now lead you to Maitreya, who lives in a hermitage near Ganga. I will leave you there as his disciple and I will proceed in my search. Get up! I have nothing to do with your sorrow and weeping. In fact you yourself have nothing to do with your weeping and this, you do not know yet. All your sorrow will disappear by the darshan of Maitreya."

Saying so, Uddhava took Vidura along with him. They crossed Yamuna and approached the banks of Ganga. As they came to the vicinity of Prayaga, Uddhava directed Vidura to the hermitage of Maitreya and departed.

Vidura served the lotus feet of Maitreya and inherited the art of imparting the secrets of this whole creation in the form of story and fable. He has known the secrets of the milky ocean, the galaxies of the body of Narayana and all the descending steps of the Devas to this earth, up to the physical frames of our earth beings. He also inherited the computation of ages and Manvantaras, the chronologies of the different races and the family trees of rulers and gurus. Last but not least, he learnt the biographies of those who lived the Bhagavata life. In order to achieve this, he also gained mastery over the Path of Devotion. As the keys of the wisdom of the solar evolution, the planetary evolution and the biological evolution of our earth, he is also initiated into the astrological allegories of the Prajapatis, the Seven Rishis, Dhruva, Prithu and the Lords of the Planets. The Path of the Lord coming down to earth in the form of Hari is thus received in its completion. As the conversation went on between the Guru and the disciple, the whole thing was dictated by Vedavyasa to his disciples, as the core of the book Mahabhagavata. By the grace of Maitreya, Vidura could assimilate the whole thing within no time and he stood

as an adept with all powers before the date of Parikshit's coronation. Now he is fit to visit the coronation festival invisibly with Vyasa, Maitreya and others. Vidura took up the role of imparting the Law of the Citizen. Thereby he wanted to lead the sense of the public towards duties, away from rights. Through the blessing of his Guru, he stood as the preceptor of his own path and is honoured by his disciples as the very incarnation of the Law.

Chapter 31

The eleventh lunar day of the increasing moon during the lunar month of Vaisakha has given a new spring of consciousness to all the beings of the land of Bharat. Warm life-giving winds travelled from south towards the sacred land of Brahma and the Himalayas beyond. The melodious voices of the Brahmins from the south came all the way to Hastina like the cuckoos of the new season. Their Sama style of Vedic chanting gave the touch of spiritual spring to the pre-sunrise horizons of Hastina. Two hours before sunrise, Parikshit underwent the sacred ritual of the coronation bath. The water of all the holy rivers of Bharat was brought and herbal juices sanctified by Vedic hymns were mixed. Parikshit was given a holy bath. Then he wore silk garments of glittering yellow. He was decorated by many jewels studded with gem stones. Draupadi gave the beautiful brow mark of musk and anjana to his eyes. After he was beautified in the royal way, she took him near the portrait of Lord Krishna. She compared the features of the countenance of Parikshit with those of Lord Krishna and gave her final touches. Again she looked into the eyes of the prince. Signs of satisfaction gave expansion to her eye brows in full satisfaction. Then she smiled. She led him into another room by hand. There was the big portrait of Abhimanyu. Subhadra and Uttara stood waiting on either side of the portrait. Draupadi made the prince bow down in veneration to the portrait first and then to Subhadra and then to Uttara. Subhadra touched his head and blessed: "You prosper by achieving the fame which your

ancestors achieved." Uttara kissed his head and said : " My boy ! May you prosper as the guiding light of the lineage in your behaviour and expression. Follow your ancestors to lead your successors. Let the wheels of your chariot run along the landmarks of the path laid down by Manu."

Then Draupadi held the left hand of the prince in her right hand and led him down the steps. Yudhishtira waited to take his hand from the hand of Draupadi. The stalwart figure of grand old Yudhishtira was beautified by many jewel of gold in the traditional way. He wore his pearl ear-rings, the sceptor and the shield. The big golden crown of the forefathers glittered over the head of Yudhishtira in studded gems like a grand temple tower seen from a distance. In his left hand he is armed with a drawn sword held tip upwards and led the prince by his right hand. He walked slow in royal gait along with his queen, while his four brothers walked on the four corners like the pillars of a temple. He led the prince through the halls and conducted the symbolic journey through a series of doorways. As he crossed the main gate of gigantic doors, he entered into the presence of two rows of royal bards singing the glory of the descent of rulers from the Lunar God up to Parikshit. Then the Vedic bards praised the prince with the hymns of Naaraasamsi. As he came out into the open parade ground he received showers of flowers from above and sprinkles of popped corn along the way. Like a big elephant walking with a little elephant, Yudhishtira led the prince in majestic gait into the holy fire ritual hall. Parikshit was made to enact the ritual of Indra and the ritual of the Bow and Arrows. Then he finished the fire offering and came out enacting the ritual of Indra, killing the coiled demon, Vritra, while the Brahmins gave a recital of the corresponding narrations. Then they came out and entered the magnificent building of Rajasabha. They both walked into the big rectangular hall of pillars and advanced towards the throne platform. As they went up the steps of the dais, they saw the two prominent lion heads sculptured in stone on either side; The lions seemed to bend their heads in

humility and smiled with half closed eyes. The whole hall was fully packed. The doorways and the windows and the pillars and the seats appeared as if made by pictures of packed humanity. Thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, thousands of feet and thousands of shoulders on all sides with focussed attention towards one point, the Emperor grandfather and the Emperor grandson.

Traditional state musicians gave drum music and Kahala sounds. Parikshit worshipped the throne and then the big sword with flowers and incense. Then he approached the big crown placed on the altar and worshipped it in reverential meditation. Yudhishtira took his hands into his own and brought the prince before the throne. Then the prince cast his graceful smile in all humility. He appeared like the increasing moon of the eleventh day passing through the lunar mansion of the royal hand, Hasta. Yudhishtira took out his crown from his head and placed it on the head of the prince. Then he took holy water kept in a big conch and poured the water in drops into the hands of the prince. With the same conch named Antariksha Hamsa, the Lord Krishna had poured holy water into the hands of Yudhishtira thirty-six years ago, when he was coronated. The divine sages and the Adepts of the holy abodes came there and gave their invisible presence. In a flash Parikshit could see them all lifting their hands and blessing them. Then he heard stringed musical notes of the lyre. Among the invisible group of Adepts, he saw a sparkling face with big shining vertical brow marks, representing the upward path of Lord Vishnu. Evidently, it was the face of Vidura, the latest Adept.

The rest of the day was occupied with continuous food offerings, weapon exhibitions and games of fight and wrestling. The night started with the enacting of playlets and dramas that depicted the life incidents of the heroes of Mahabharata war. Along with his grandfathers and other family members, Parikshit went round the city by foot and enjoyed the performances. The five old Pandavas witnessed the scene

of the birth of Pandavas. They were wondered at the make-up and the dramatic skill of the artists and stood dumb founded as they witnessed the living portrait of their father, which they did not remember well. Tears stood in their eyes. Another party enacted the childhood scenes of Lord Krishna, Parikshit got enrapt into the atmosphere of the mystic child. He began to dance without his own knowledge. Then he noticed it and smiled to himself. A third party enacted the scene of the Kurus trying to insult Draupadi by leaving her naked. As she witnessed the scene, Draupadi drew her upper garment close around her neck. Tears dribbled down her cheeks, while she went into deep meditation with half closed eyes. A fourth party enacted the scene of Arjuna in the guise of a Sanyasi, trying to enter into romantic advances with Subhadra. Among the audience, the old Subhadra got startled and smiled at her husband by her side. Arjuna said: "Nothing to fear. It is all the skill of the actors. Now you know my age." Subhadra retorted: "You are, by force of situation, an adept in dramaturgy. Age is no bar to those who know the secrets of make-up." Then they continued to witness the show. A different party enacted the drama of Kurukshetra war. When the scene of the battle of Padmavyuha began and when the Kuru heroes surrounded to murder Abhimanyu, then it became unbearable. Uttara, Subhadra and Panchali bent their heads in tears and sobs. They stood up and left the show abruptly to reach their harem. Parikshit witnessed the whole scene silently and studied the intrigue of the tragic scene. Then he remarked with a loaded heart: "This is really a fight between principles and not persons." With a deep sigh, Arjuna remarked: "My innocent child! It is the scene which stood as the first proof of the fact that no one can fight against his own fate."

Chapter 32

"The duration of life in a physical body is like the duration of a drama on the stage. From the time of entrance to the time of exit, the whole life is an experience of the actor, representing the role of a character. Hence it cannot be original in its values and experience. It can contain the show with some action and the delivery of speech. The ultimate purpose cannot find its place in it. The purpose always lies behind the scenes and never comes into action. It exists as suggestion concealed in the conversations and revealed in the indirect representations of the various symbols. The relationships in this life belong to the story and not to the actor. One should know that they are the detached sequences of our duties. If one does not understand this, one thinks that they are one's own works. Then he begins to struggle continuously. In the meanwhile, the curtain of time drops down just as it was raised previously."

"However much valour the actor exhibits in the drama and whatever inspiration he produces, it all depends upon the incidents created by the author and not the actors. However much affection has been showered, it goes to the characters and never belongs to the actors."

"Even though one is made to sit on the throne or marries celestial damsels, all the splendour belongs to the invisible characters and not the visible actors at all. If he cannot understand this and if he really believes that he is honoured, he will serve the purpose of emotional identification and he will be deceived by time."

"Knowing all this, if one remembers one's position as an actor continuously and begins to act, then the drama between birth and death will have no emotion. It becomes a poor presentation of the sequence of details. The actor should find out the beauty of his make-up in the mirror. Then he should super-impose it upon his own personality and discharge his duties. If not, it results in a piece of lifeless beauty."

"He should remember that the author of the drama between his birth and death is not himself. He should remember that the author is someone who is really creative. Then he can enact the role with veneration and humility. Then it is a success and it carries the emotional appeal. It remains to be an undeniable fact that from the beginning to the end, the Indweller has no independence of action, since he has to observe the rules verbatim."

The five brothers of the Pandavas sat before the throned emperor Parikshit and made the above remarks in a leisurely and appealing tone. Then Draupadi added :

"After all is said and done, the actor of an indweller should not be hurried to his exit, until he has accomplished his portion. When once it is accomplished, he should not commit the mistake of using the stage any further. All the relationships in between are only super-imposed and they belong to the imagination aspect. Since they are not true, they are of a transitory nature. No one should carry any spark of glamour for them. Our portion is finished. The culmination of our play and the purpose of our play lie in you. Now we await your permission to renounce and start on our journey of no return. You have grown in wisdom and you know the nature of everyone's duties. This is the one wish that your grandfather held in his heart to put forth before you. At the time of one's exit from the drama of life, there is nothing that follows the Indweller."

While Draupadi remarked so, a mighty voice intervened from the sky above and corrected: "It is not true that

nothing follows after death. Law, the ultimate nature of things, follows everyone after death. That which exists beyond the screen of the entrance and exit is what is known as the background. It is the Ultimate Justice and the Ultimate Law that governs. It follows everyone throughout life as his lot. Then after death, it follows the Indweller like a vigilant dog. It is to make an approach to the import of this Law that the author of the drama creates sequences. If one knows and honours by enacting, then the Law stands as protection. If one overlooks, then the Dog appears and passes away from the cognizance of the Indweller as Death."

All listened to the voice of the sky with rapt attention. They shuddered and sat silent. Parikshit stood up, bowed down to his grandfathers in all humility and said: "You spoke the words of Law in such a way that it cannot be denied even by the Devas and the Rishis. Thus you made me dumbfounded. But to me, the tiny one, the idea of your exile is a thing which I cannot venture to imagine. Had you been my grandfathers simply, then it would not have been so difficult for me to permit and bear. You gave me life, you saved my life, you gave me the light of wisdom and you made me see the ultimate fitness of things. You initiated the spark of my consciousness to find its place in the light of our Lord, who is Vasudeva himself. I cannot imagine my existence in your absence. Is it not possible for you to renounce everything and live here in our presence as gods daily worshipped by me? Is it not possible for you to stay here as Sanyasis, shedding the light of your presence upon the various incidents of my life? The integration of the Law of Bharat created many a problem to your ripe minds on many occasions. Where do I stand without your support?"

Yudhishtira: "Great Emperors of the hoary past like Nriga, Gaya, Ambarisha, Maandhata, Yayaati, Raghu and Srirama had served the earth by their rule through prolonged glorious spans. In the end, they honoured the land by

renouncing it and handing over their ideals to the trained heirs. No one of them carried a speck of attachment with them. It is the path we are to tread and it is fortunate if we do not wish to find an alternative. My child! Remember that time exhales beings and brings them together. Once again it separates beings and inhales them. See how the palmyrah tree shoots up folded tender leaves in periodical rings. As these leaves unfold into maturity, the older leaves do not show inclination to bend towards the tender leaves. Instead they bend down and find themselves ripe to return to earth. It is the only way to hold the tree as a tree through the spirals of time. The total Law of the ultimate values is made to reflect upon the crown of the palmyrah tree. The generations of rulers are symbolised by its leaves. This should not pass as our decision. This should find its way as our wish and your acceptance. Then it is a joy to us and not an inevitability."

Parikshit slowly bent his head in deep silence. He bowed to his grandfather in all veneration. From among the advisers of the Jury, Yuyutsu stood up and said: "I have something to say. Now the State of Indraprastha is divided into three. Arjuna has distributed it among the descendants of the Yadu, Vrishni and Bhoja clans. Then it is the duty of the elders to wait and study the consequences and to see that Parikshit is established on this throne. Then only I feel that the time is ripe for you to leave. Finally I believe, in my heart of hearts, that the land of Bharat as a whole should come under the rulership of the one who belongs to the Lunar lineage. It goes a long way to establish peace in the land."

Yudhishtira: "I know that you are experienced. I know that you are our man. Hence I believe in your presence. I hereby entrust to you the welfare of the land along with the welfare of our Emperor as well as that of the Yadu, Vrishni and Bhoja princes. May your mind understand justice as I understand and balance the Law as I balanced,

Protest them and protect the land. You are the one who knows my heart."

Yuyutsu : "I know that you are the Son of the Law, the Ultimate Justice. Your clear and distinct vision rests more upon the pointer of the scales of Law than upon the sharp tip of the arrow. And it is a sure shot! I have nothing to say. May it come to pass!"

Before the dawn of full moon of Vaisakha, Yudhishtira and his brothers approached the holy fire altar and performed their last fire offering. The ritual of the full moon was accomplished along with the soli-lunar monthly ritual. Then they worshipped the three sacred fires. Dhaumya, their priest, directed their ceremony of offering the implements of the ritual before renunciation. In the Viraja offering, Yudhishtira emptied every container of offering into the fire. Then he offered the containers also, including the laddles of ghee. By the time the ritual was completed, there were thousands of Brahmins occupying the hall of ceremonies. Yudhishtira made Parikshit offer many valuable things to the Brahmins. He offered gold and cows in the end. Then the five brothers divested their body of gold and valuables and offered them all to the holy Brahmins. Then they were clad in sack cloth and tied their hair up into a tassel with the latex of the banian. They stood at the entrance of the main gate. Parikshit, Subhadra and Uttara came and prostrated before the holy feet. Arjuna addressed Subhadra : "Henceforth you spend your remaining span in peace and calm under the care of our little Emperor. Now you have only two as your relatives, Uttara and Parikshit."

Saying so, Arjuna looked at Yudhishtira. Yudhishtira crossed the gate. The brothers and Draupadi followed. Then a dog followed. Then the seven beings proceeded in silence. The citizens stood in two groups on either side, headed by the great ones of the city. A wave of sorrow passed over them, as a breaker of sobs. They stood in rows and touched the holy feet of Yudhishtira, who passed silently. Parikshit

accompanied the seven up to the outskirts of the city with folded hands, bent head and without any upper garment. Dhaumya, the priest, stopped him at the city limits and ordered him not to proceed. Then the whole city gazed at the seven until they disappeared into the eastern horizon. Dhaumya led the Emperor back to the palace. The seven beings travelled eastward to trace the clockwise path around the holy land as their predecessors did.

Chapter 33

It took three years for Parikshit to go round the country as he aspired from after the date of his coronation. First he tried to understand every aspect of the situation in the country. He stabilised his relationships with the ministers, priests, secretaries, staff and the servants of the royal houses and offices. They were hereditary posts and it became inevitable to him to test the fidelity and lack of temptation among them. Then he honoured them with houses and grants. All this process took three months. Then he had to bring under his control the watchers, patrollers, the police, the municipality, the treasury, the revenue and the audit. This took one month. Then he recognised the war generals, army, squadrons, intelligence, information, spying and communications. It took three months more before he could win their hearts. Then he turned towards the merchandise, trade, commerce, livestock and agriculture. It took six months for him to bring the administration to order and win over those engaged in these activities. By this time, the network of employees in the country began to love him and favour him. The atmosphere became favourable and pleasant. Then he renovated the forts, fort walls, hill stations, forest stations, dams and bridges. He prevented the weak spots from exposure to enemy onslaughts. It took one year more. Even then the north-west was not out of danger. The borders abounded with the anti-national elements, from Saka, Yavana, Barbara, Pulinda tribes of the north-west. The mountain ranges and the jungles of the area were filled with enemies and friends and they were considered as perilous

ones. Then he brought under control the offices of tolls, customs, ports and exchange centres. He reestablished international trade with Lanka, Siddhapuri, Patala and Romaka. The city of Barbarika in the Province of Sindhu rose to the status of International commercial centre. All this work took three years for him to finish.

Everyday in the morning, he stood in meditation before the life size portrait of Lord Krishna blowing his conch before the war. He enjoyed various experiences of communication in the form of his inner voice. He received messages and programmes which he noted down and followed to the very word. From the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, he engraved the verdicts of the Bhagavadgita on pillars, arches and porches of wood and stone. He had his code of five points engraved throughout the country in the name of Dharma Ratna Panchaka. It is as follows :

1. "When Law is not respected, threat should rule."
2. "Punishment used as threat is no violence."
3. "Atonement for crime is to accept it before the open gathering of the inhabitants. One who subjects oneself to atonement is not to be punished."
4. "Large-heartedness in excusing the faults of others checks the influence of Kali."
5. "One who commits an anti-national crime for a second time should be imprisoned life-long."

Wages for the agriculturists, livestock tenders, hereditary professions and the teaching class should be paid in kind, not in cash, among the villagers. These people were exempted from paying taxes. Money exchange was prohibited in villages. Money exchange, banking, commerce and trade were encouraged in the cities. Taxes were enhanced in the case of the people of these professions. One-third of the revenue was being spent for public works, education, town planning, cultural centres and spiritual centres. The idols of Rama with Sita, or Vaasudeva were installed in the

temples throughout the land. Every temple included a school and a hospital. Parikshit awakened the national spirit of the country through such projects and many other pious deeds of the administrative order. He made them all in the name of the Lord and established Law in the land of the Vedas. He restricted the use of iron and steel to the construction of dams, production of machines and weapons. He prohibited the use of iron and steel as crockery and dally household equipment. He believed that it induced the thoughts of Kali among people.

In this way he made the administration stable, able and aware. After achieving all these things and after completing three years' rule from the date of his coronation, he handed over the responsibility to the ministers and the Raja Sabha. Then he set out to go round the holy land, clockwise, as it was the custom of the ancient rulers. He walked to the city of Madhura and met the ruler. There he visited the spot where Krishna killed Chanura, Mushtika and Kamsa. He also visited the prison where the parents of Krishna were kept. From there he proceeded to Brindavan and Vraja. There he walked with the cowherd families who lived with the Lord when he was a child. He took his food there and spent some time in sprightly conversation of the Lord's anecdotes. He arranged for thousands of cows to be offered to them and then proceeded to Magadha. In the capital Girivraja, he was welcomed and honoured by the great grandson of Jarasandha. He visited the wrestling circle filled with filtered red sand. This is the spot where Bhīma fought Jarasandha and killed him. Parikshit took a pinch of the red sand and had it as his brow mark in veneration of his grandfather. Then he proceeded to the Province of Brahma. He started his journey from the Province of Brahma. Then covered the Province of Vanga. He took a holy dip in the Eastern Ocean there and proceeded to Utkala, Kalinga and Andhra. Then he visited Tenkana and Kerala. He went on a pilgrimage to the holy hills of Sahya and Malaya. He touched the southern tip of the land and worshipped

the Power Goddess, the Daughter of the Mount, who exists as the Virgin Mother. He passed on to Karnataka and Konkana and reached the western shore. Krishnagiri, Hastigiri and Ghatotkachagiri caves were sanctified by the touch of his feet. Then he reached Maharashtra, where he was welcomed. Wherever he visited, he was hailed as the Holy Emperor and the darling child of the people. He demanded their respect and affection. Everywhere he visited, the temples were planned by Uddhava and the beautiful images of Krishna installed by Uddhava and himself. In the evenings, he used to attend the discourses of the scripture of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata. He enjoyed the discourses and took delight in the stories of his ancestors and their guide, the Lord Himself. He was invited to the recitals of prose and poetry glorifying his father and grandfathers. He attended the dramas, playlets, dance plays and rustic amusements, where the glorifying incidents of the Mahabharata war were being enacted. In all detail he could better understand the relationship between the Lord and his grandfathers. How great it was and how glorious it was that his grandfathers lived as the relatives and close friends of the Lord! The Lord Himself, who is a cosmic Soul and the embodiment of national consciousness, enacted the role of a friend, a relative, a guide, a minister, an arbitrator, a chariot driver and a Guru. In his discourses, the Emperor praised the unbounded love of the Lord and took part in the musical recitals.

He stayed for one day in the city of Pratishtana. Then he crossed the Maharashtra borders and entered the land of the Ghurjaras. He went into ecstasies in his devotion and walked heading the processions along the streets. He visited the shore, where Dwarka existed. There he offered his prayers to the setting sun, who stood as the Index of Time for the blood red story of the Yadavas. Right through he darted to the north-west, to the banks of Sindhu. He felt the atmosphere eerie. Spiritualists and godmen appeared but very rarely. With great curiosity, he entered the international metropolitan city of Barbarika. The city was built as a beautiful island in the

middle of the River Sindhu. The streets were congested with busy citizens and floating population from many countries. The culture of the foreigners glittered everywhere in the form of exhibitions, market places, bidding places and well-organised gambling houses. In the night, it appeared as the island of a magician with eye-dazzling illuminations and multi-coloured domes. Skyscrapers served as comfortable harbours of hotel trade and highly hygienic brothels certified by famous physicians.

One night he took shelter in the house of an orthodox Brahmin. Even though he was made comfortable, he could not sleep. Thoughts chased like hounds. He spent his time in the meditation of the Lord, when he saw a picture of an incident before his eyes. A cow was talking to her child, the bull: "My boy! you see that the Lord comes down as the Sun God, who serves as the fertilising bull to the Mother Earth, the Sacred Cow. He fertilises the earth with his seed in the form of the seven-fold ray. Thus he conducts the sacrifice of offering himself as the existence of the beings on this earth. Thus he plays the role of the Prajapati, the Lord of all measures and meters. He creates many types of sacrifices on earth through his measures and meters. The Earth Goddess, in her joy, goes round the Sun dancing and manifests the seasons to conceive the light of the Lord in the form of the *fauna and flora* of this earth. Breezes serve them as their mutual touch, which radiates warmth. The charge of the warmth creates water as moisture. Then the water forms as the ocean of the medium of life. It invites the vital fire from the Sun God in the form of the pulsations of Prana and accepts him as her son-in-law. As a result, there is the manifestation of life on earth in many meters. The one-footed meter sprouts from the one-syllabled meter as the seed and takes the vertical tide. It results in the birth of the one-footed beings, the plant, the tree, the shrub and the herb. All these beings live as life-eaters and eaters of no living being. They stand as the eternal examples of pious non-harmful creation. They worship the sacred beings of

light called Marichis who come down to earth through the solar ray. These one-footed beings live in penance, since they eat directly from the earth, water, air and sunlight and not from any living being. They follow the upward path and communicate directly with the Sun God. We the quadrupeds live as examples of the four-lined meter of the Lord's song. Yet we eat from the born beings and not life directly. Hence we stand horizontal and not vertical. We are deprived of the upward path. The trees, the noble ones require no shelter of anyone, while we need the shelter of the tree. The germs and worms and the scorpions centipedes, millipedes, the reptiles and the serpents and also some quadrupeds kill and eat the plant and the animal. Hence they go down into the chasms and the caves and they cannot soar upwards. They require not only shade, but also darkness to hide themselves. Man represents the two-lined meter of the Lord's song, since he is a biped. His path is neither horizontal nor vertical, neither upward nor downward, but it runs oblique. That means he can choose either to follow the downward path or the upward path. He can afford to fall or rise. As the age of Kali approached, he begins to eat from the plant and the beast. He can also hunt and eat or hunt and kill without eating. He is beginning to eat not only the fruit of the tree, but also the tree itself, with its root and shoot. He has learnt to subsist on my milk and he is not satisfied. He kills my children to pilfer all my milk. Further he is attempting to kill me and eat. That means, he never minds killing his mother or father or torture them.

"You stand on earth as the incarnation of the Law with your four legs representing truthfulness, purity, compassion and penance. In the Kritayuga, you stood erect on your four legs. In the Tretayuga, one leg was broken and that is penance. You began to limp. In Dwaparayuga, a second leg was broken and that is compassion. You walked lame. In the Kaliyuga your third leg is broken and it is purity. Now you attempt to walk jumping on your single left leg.

Truthfulness exists not as a virtue in the Kali age, but as a means of livelihood and as a life-saving factor in case of emergency. As I witness, you vainly attempt to walk on one leg, I am not able to imagine the future of the crazy mankind. Mankind conditions itself to walk through war, hatred, jealousy and mutual destruction. I fear to think of the probable void of mankind on this earth."

Parikshit witnessed the whole scene of conversation in rapt silence. Instantaneously, he thought of the Lord and went into meditation. The next morning he left the house of the Brahmin and went into the metropolis to study the situation. After going through a few busy streets, he saw a crowd of people gathered around a dark hefty figure with an armour and a crown made of steel. He had in his right hand a broad glittering sword of steel. He wore heavy footwear sheeted in steel. He had a cow and a bull with him and he lectured about the importance of cow-slaughter and beef-eating. In Barbara language he made a fluent speech which explained the advantages of beef-eating and the economics in killing the non-serviceable cows and the bulls of the country. After the preaching was finished, he took to a demonstration of cow and bull slaughter. He tied the animal tight at the feet and felled them to the ground with the help of a wooden cross. He explained how it was not wrong to touch the cow and the bull with the foot. He assured that no gods would show their wrath when kicking the animals. To prove this, he kicked the cow and the bull on the bellies with his pointed, nailed steel boot. The beings opened their lips in pain, while grass pieces came out of the mouth in froth and foam. They cast feeble, wistful looks with tears in their eyes. Then he stretched his right hand to show the wide steel sword. He made it glitter in the shining sun in a ritualistic way. Then Parikshit jumped at him like a lion-cub and gripped the hand of the butcher right by the wrist, with his right grip. As Parikshit tightened his grip, the sword fell down to the ground from the gripped hand. Then the Barbara official grew pale and stood confused. The eyes of Parikshit grew red with

rage. Sweat covered his delicate face as the many jasmine buds. Parikshit roared: "What harm can these harmless creatures cause you, the cruel fool? They do not kill or eat like the tiger, the lion or the serpent or the scorpion. Nor are they meat-eaters. They live on the tender grass of the meadows and quench their thirst with the water of the hill stream and offer their life sap to you, the human creature, in the form of their milk and their labour to till your land. The biped plunders the life force of these beings for which vile act he has to show gratitude life-long. You are standing on the ground of the land where people study nature and learn virtues by imitating. There is no place for a cruel butcher like you in this Vedic land. I understand that the keynote of your psychology is that of a cruel fool. Hence there is no use of preaching you sermons. The need is that you should be killed. Get ready. I kill you."

As Parikshit roared out these words, he emitted a flash of light, which dazzled the crowd like the many lightnings of thunderbolts. Parikshit was not conscious of it, since it was not visible to him. In a plague of fear, people jumped back and ran into dispersal and disappearance. Parikshit continued :

"When Law is not venerated, dread should lead. To that effect I now propose to chop your head off." As he spoke, there was the sudden appearance of the arrows and the bow in his hands, which he could not notice. Two more hands appeared above the shoulders of Parikshit. The one held the conch and the other, the wheel rotating. The Barbara officer lost his commanding look and stood aghast like the head of a burnt palm tree. He removed the steel crown from his head and placed it before the feet of Parikshit with trembling hands. He touched the feet of the Emperor and begged for his life. Parikshit smiled in anger and remarked : "If the cruel one is timid, he is too dangerous to be excused. A criminal without heroism who loses his heart and touches the feet is really the one who can torture the whole creation. You

belong to such a type. If I leave you now, you do not hesitate to kill the cow in my absence."

As Parikshit spoke, his glittering crown suddenly exhibited the peacock tuft. Hundreds and thousands of the shapes of Parikshit came out from him and surrounded the Barbara in his eyes. All were peacock tufts, silk garments of golden glitter and the conch and the wheel. Everyone had the musk brow mark and pearl ear-rings and many necklaces of pearls. The Barbara turned round and round in great vertigo to see the many forms. With folded hands he said: "My Lord! You are before me, behind me, beside me and over and above me. In all the ten directions I pay my salutations to you. Oh benevolent one! See how I tremble with fear. I beg you for my life. I beg you to save me. Noble ones like you do not like to kill those who take refuge. Save me."

Since Parikshit could not know what the Barbara saw around him, he was surprised to see why the Barbara sank down so meekly. He said: "Get out, you the low born! Learn to live in discretion. Understand that the grandson of Arjuna will never kill those who beg for life. I am the Emperor of this land, but I am the living agent of the Law. This holy land rests protected within the fortress walls of my arms. Leave the boundaries and get yourself out of this land. If you try to deceive, you cannot escape."

Barbara: "Oh My noble one! I am helpless. I want shelter to live. I promise I do not transgress my limits and boundaries fixed by you."

Parikshit: "If that were to be so, I will grant you four places to live. Where life is killed, you will survive. Where there is gambling and where there is alcoholism you will survive. Where the woman sells her body, you will survive there. Now you get out of my sight."

Barbara: "My Lord! I will make a second request. Grant me some more spots where I can go round to enjoy."

Parikshit : " A beggar who repeats begging after granting, is less than a cur. But still I sanction you places to enjoy just as the serpents and the scorpions are permitted to enjoy in the chasms. Live in the houses of those who toil hard to multiply money and gold for hoarding. Live in the houses of the impudent human creatures who do not care for the learned and the elders. Live in those houses where you find human beasts of sex and gluttony. Live in those houses, where you find the sadism of torture. Live with those who use the court of Law to establish their rights. Enough. Remember always that I do not overlook you. Now you can get out of my sight. "

Barbara : " Oh Divine Ruler ! I cannot harm you and your land even though you overlook me. I received shelter from you and I express my thanks by warning you of something that proves really dangerous to you. Among the Brahmins of your land, there are some venomous serpents. They have the peculiar nature of cutting off the branch on which they stand. Your Lord Krishna saved these Brahmins and protected their rights life long. He met his end due to the curse of a Brahmin. They are such fools. You save them and protect them as you saved and protected me. You continue to do this. But I wish you do not overlook the venomous sting of the Brahmin that may bring about your culmination. I very much wish that you save them and save me life long and live through the Kali age as your span.

This is the seventh volume of the biography of The One who comes down to earth to lay The Law. His presence is felt by those who like Him and those who dislike Him. He is traced and followed by those who seek Him, even after five thousand years. Every time He is expected, His coming is anticipated before His birth. He is the One who comes in many forms. Some of the incidents of one physical incarnation have been traced and engraved in these Seven volumes.

—*Kulapati* E. Krishnamacharya